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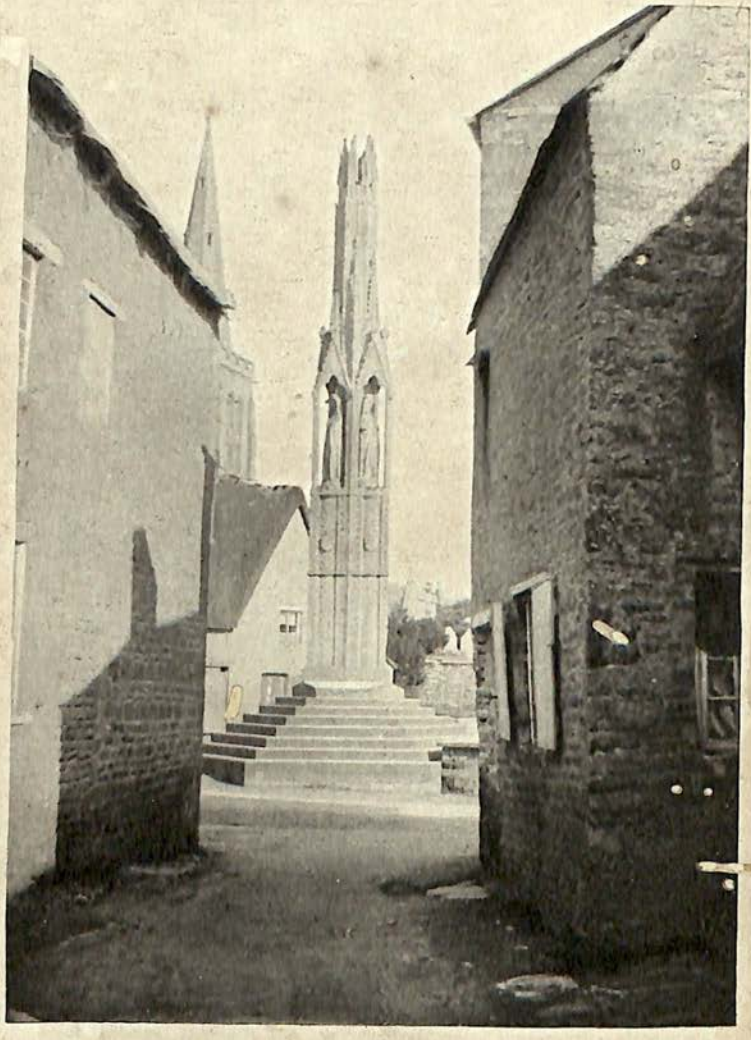
NOOKS AND CORNERS OF OLD ENGLAND



Queen Eleanor's Cross
at Geddington.

NOOKS AND CORNERS OF OLD ENGLAND

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BY

ALLAN FEA

AUTHOR OF
"SECRET CHAMBERS AND HIDING PLACES" "PICTURESQUE OLD HOUSES"
"FLIGHT OF THE KING" ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
BY THE AUTHOR

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TO

MY OLD FRIEND

SEYMOUR LUCAS, R.A., F.S.A.

THIS BOOK

IS AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBED

A RECENT glance over some old Ordnance Maps, the companions of many a ramble in the corners of Old England, has suggested the idea of jotting down a few fragmentary notes, which we trust may be of interest.

Upon a former occasion we wandered with pencil and camera haphazard off the beaten track mainly in the counties surrounding the great Metropolis; and though there are several tempting "Nooks" still near at hand, we have now extended our range of exploration.

We only trust the reader will derive a little of the pleasure we have found in compiling this little volume.

A. F.

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NOOKS AND CORNERS

NOOKS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE AND NORTH NORTHANTS

At Huntingdon we are on familiar ground with Samuel Pepys. When he journeyed northwards to visit his parental house or to pay his respects to Lord Sandwich's family at Hinchinbrooke, he usually found suitable accommodation at "Goody Gorums" and "Mother" somebody else who lived over against the "Crown." Neither the famous posting-house the "George" nor the "Falcon" are mentioned in the *Diary*, but he speaks of the "Chequers"; however, the change of names of ancient hostelries is common, so in picturing the susceptible Clerk of the Admiralty chucking a pretty chambermaid under the chin in the old galleried yard of the "George," we may not be far out of our reckoning.

But altogether the old George Inn is somewhat disappointing. Its balustraded galleries are there sure enough, with the queer old staircase leading up to them in one of the corners; but it has the same burnished-up appearance of the courtyard of the Leicester Hospital at Warwick. How much more pleasing both would strike the eye were there less paint and varnish. The Inn has been refronted, and from the street has quite a modern appearance.

Huntingdon recalls the sterner name of Cromwell. Strange that this county, so proud of the Lord Protector (for has it not recently set up a gorgeous statue at St. Ives to his memory?), should still harbour red-hot Jacobites! According to *The Legitimist Calendar*, mysterious but harmless meetings are still held hereabouts on Oak Apple Day: a day elsewhere all but forgotten. Huntingdon was the headquarters of the Royalist army certainly upon many occasions, and when evil days fell upon the "Martyr King," some of his staunchest friends were here secretly working for his welfare.[1] When Charles passed through the town in 1644, the mayor, loyal to the backbone, had prepared a speech to outrival the flowery welcome of his fellow-magistrates: "Although Rome's Hens," he said, "should daily hatch of its preposterous eggs, chroco-

[1] See *Memoirs of the Martyr King.*

dilicall chickens, yet under the Shield of Faith, by you our most Royal Sovereigne defended and by the King of Heavens as I stand and your most medicable councell, would we not be fearful to withstand them."[1] Though the sentence is somewhat involved, the worthy magnate doubtless meant well.

It was the custom, by the way, so Evelyn tells us, when a monarch passed through Huntingdon, to meet him with a hundred ploughs as a symbol of the fruitful soil: the county indeed at one time was rich in vines and hops, and has been described by old writers as the garden of England. Still here as elsewhere the farmers' outlook is a poor one to-day, although there are, of course, exceptions.

At historic Hinchinbrooke (on June 4, 1647), King Charles slept the first night after he was removed from Holdenby House by Cornet Joyce: the first stage of his *progress* to the scaffold. In the grounds of the old mansion, the monarch, when Prince of Wales, and little Oliver played together, for the owner in those days of the ancient seat of the Montagues and Cromwells was the future Protector's uncle and godfather. Upon one occasion the boys had a stand-up fight, and the commoner, the senior by only one year, made his royal adversary's nose bleed, — an augury for fatal events to follow. The story is told how little

[1] *Evelyn's Diary*, vol. iv. p. 134, 1870 ed.

Oliver fell into the Ouse and was fished out by a Royalist piscatorial parson. Years afterwards, when the Protector revisited the scenes of his youth in the midst of his triumphant army, he encountered his rescuer, and asked him whether he remembered the occurrence.

"Truly do I," was the prompt reply; "and the Lord forgive me, but I wish I'd let thee drown."

The Montagues became possessed of the estate in 1627. Pepys speaks of "the brave rooms and good pictures," which pleased him better than those at Audley End. The Diarist's parental house remains at Brampton, a little to the west of Huntingdon. In characteristic style he records a visit there in October 1667: "So away for Huntingdon mightily pleased all along the road to remember old stories, and come to Brampton at about noon, and there found my father and sister and brother all well: and here laid up our things, and up and down to see the gardens with my father, and the house; and do altogether find it very pretty, especially the little parlour and the summer-houses in the garden, only the wall do want greens up it, and the house is too low roofed; but that is only because of my coming from a house with higher ceilings."

Before turning our steps northwards, let us glance at the mediæval bridge that spans the river Ouse, to Godmanchester, which is referred

to by the thirteenth-century historian *Henry of Huntingdon* as "a noble city." But its nobility has long since departed, and some modern monstrosities in architecture make the old Tudor buildings which remain, blush for such brazen-faced obtrusion. Its ancient water-mill externally looks so dilapidated, that one would think the next "well-formed depression" from America would blow it to atoms. Not a bit of it. Its huge timber beams within, smile at such fears. It is a veritable fortress of timber. But although this solid wooden structure defies the worst of gales, there are rumours of coming electric tramways, and then, alas! the old mill will bow a dignified departure, and the curfew, which yet survives, will then also perhaps think it is time to be gone.

At Little Stukeley, on the Great North Road some three miles above Huntingdon, is a queer old inn, the "Swan and Salmon," bearing upon its sign the date 1676. It is a good example of the brick-work of the latter half of the seventeenth century. Like many another ancient hostelry on the road to York, it is associated with Dick Turpin's exploits; and to give colour to the tradition, mine host can point at a little masked hiding-place situated somewhere at the back of the sign up in its gable end. It certainly looks the sort of place that could relate stories of highwaymen; a roomy

old building, which no doubt in its day had trap-doors and exits innumerable for the convenience of the gentlemen of the road.

A little off the ancient "Ermine Street," to the north-west of Stukeley, is the insignificant village of Coppingford, historically interesting from the fact that when Charles I. fled from Oxford in disguise in 1646, he stopped the night there at a little obscure cottage or alehouse, on his way to seek protection of the Scots at Southwell. "This day one hundred years ago," writes Dr. Stukeley in his *Memoirs* on May 3, 1746, "King Charles, Mr. John Ashburnham, and Dr. Hudson came from Coppingford in Huntingdonshire and lay at Mr. Alderman Wolph's house, now mine, on Barn Hill; all the day obscure." Hudson, from whom Sir Walter drew his character of Dr. Rochecliffe in *Woodstock*, records the fact in the following words: "We lay at Copingforde in Huntingdonshire one Sunday, 3 May; wente not to church, but I read prayers to the King; and at six at night he went to Stamforde. I writte from Copingforde to Mr. Skipwith for a horse, and he sente me one, which was brought to me at Stamforde. ——at Copingforde the King and me, with my hoste and hostis and two children, were by the fire in the hall. There was noe other chimney in the house."[1] The village of Little

[1] See *Memoirs of the Martyr King*, p. 73.

Gidding, still farther to the north-west, had often before been visited by Charles in connection with a religious establishment that had been founded there by the Ferrar family. A curious old silk coffer, which was given by Charles to the nieces of the founder, Nicholas Ferrar, upon one of these occasions, some years ago came into the possession of our late queen, and is still preserved at Windsor.

A few miles to the north-east is Glatton, another remote village where old May-day customs yet linger. There are some quaint superstitions in the rural districts hereabouts. A favourite remedy for infectious disease is to open the window of the sickroom not so much to let in the fresh air as to admit the gnats, which are believed to fly away with the malady and die. The beneficial result is never attributed to oxygen!

The Roman road (if, indeed, it is the same, for some authorities incline to the opinion that it ran parallel at some little distance away) is unpicturesque and dreary. Towering double telegraph poles recur at set intervals with mathematical regularity, and the breeze playing upon the wires aloft brings forth that long-drawn melancholy wail only to make the monotony more depressing. Half a mile from the main road, almost due east of Glatton, stands Connington Hall, where linger sad memories of the fate of Mary Queen of Scots. When the castle of Fotheringay was demolished

in 1625, Sir Robert Cotton had the great Hall in which she was beheaded removed here. The curious carved oak chair which was used by the poor Queen at Fotheringay until the day of her death may now be seen in Connington Church, where also is the Tomb of Sir Robert, the founder of the famous Cottonian Library.

A couple of miles or so to the north is Stilton, which bears an air of decayed importance. A time-mellowed red-brick Queen Anne house, whose huge wooden supports, like cripples' crutches, keep it from toppling over, comes first in sight. In striking contrast, with its formal style of architecture, is the picturesque outline of the ancient inn beyond. A complicated flourish of ornamental ironwork, that would exasperate the most expert freehand draughtsman, supports the weather-beaten sign of solid copper. Upon the right-hand gable stands the date 1642, bringing with it visions of the coming struggle between King and Parliament. But the date is misleading, as may be seen from the stone groining upon the adjoining masonry. The main building was certainly erected quite a century earlier. Here and there modern windows have been inserted in place of the Tudor mullioned ones, as also have later doorways, for part of the building is now occupied as tenements. The archway leading into the courtyard has also been somewhat modernised, as may be judged from the

THE BELL, STILTON.

corresponding internal arch, with its original curved dripstone above.

We came upon this inn, tramping northwards in a bitter day in March. It looked homely and inviting, the waning sunlight tinting the stonework and lighting up the window casements. Enthusiastic with pleasing imaginings of panelled chambers and ghostly echoing corridors, we entered only to have our dreams speedily dispersed. In vain we sought for such a "best room" as greeted Mr. Chester at the "Maypole." There were no rich rustling hangings here, nor oaken screens enriched with grotesque carvings. Alas! not even a cheery fire of fagots. Nor, indeed, was there a bed to rest our weary bones upon. Spring cleaning was rampant, and the merciless east wind sweeping along the bare passages made one shudder more than usual at the thought of that terrible annual necessity (but the glory of energetic housewives). But surely mine hostess of the good old days would have scrupled to thrust the traveller from her door: moreover to a house of refreshment, or rather eating-house, a stone's-throw off, uncomfortably near that rickety propped-up red-brick residence.

With visions of the smoking bowl and lavender-scented sheets dashed to the ground, we turned away. But, lo! and behold a good *angel* had come to the rescue. So absorbed had we been

with the possibilities of the "Bell" that the "Angel" opposite had quite been overlooked. This rival inn of Georgian date furnished us with cosy quarters. From our flower-bedecked window the whole front of the old "Bell" could be leisurely studied in all its varying stages of light and shade —an inn with a past; an object-lesson for the philosopher to ruminate upon. Yes, in its day one can picture scenes of lavish, shall we say Ainsworthian hospitality. There is a smack of huge venison pasties, fatted capons, and of roasted peacocks about this hoary hostel. And its stables; one has but to stroll up an adjacent lane to get some idea of the once vast extent of its out-buildings. The ground they covered must have occupied nearly half the village. Here was stabling for over eighty horses, and before the birth of trains, thirty-six coaches pulled up daily at the portal for hungry passengers to refresh or rest.

The famous cheese, by the way, was first sold at this inn; but why it was dubbed Stilton instead of Dalby in Leicestershire, where it was first manufactured, is a mystery. Like its *vis-à-vis*, the "Angel" is far different from what it was in its flourishing days. The main building is now occupied for other purposes, and its dignity has long since departed. To-day Stilton looks on its last legs. The goggled motor-fiend sweeps by

to Huntingdon or Peterborough while Stilton rubs its sleepy eyes. But who can tell but that its fortunes may yet revive. Was not Broadway dying a natural death when Jonathan, who invariably tells us what treasures we possess, stepped in and made it popular? Some enterprising landlord might do worse than take the old "Bell" in hand and ring it to a profitable tune. But judging by appearances, visitors to-day, at least in March, are few and far between.

Half the charm of Stilton lies in the fact that there is no hurry. It is quite refreshing in these days of rush. For instance, you want to catch a train at Peterborough,—at least we did, for that was the handiest way of reaching Oundle, some seven miles to the west of Stilton as the crow flies. Sitting on thorns, we awaited the convenience of the horse as to whether his accustomed jog-trot would enable us to catch our train. We *did* catch it truly, but the anxiety was a terrible experience.

Oundle is full of old inns. The "Turk's Head," facing the church, is a fine and compact specimen of Jacobean architecture. It was a brilliant morning when we stood in the churchyard looking up at the ball-surmounted gables standing out in bold relief against the clear blue sky, while the caw of a colony of rooks sailing overhead seemed quite in harmony with the old-world surroundings.

More important and flourishing is the "Talbot," which looks self-conscious of the fact that in its walls are incorporated some of the remains of no less historic a building than Fotheringay Castle, whose moat and fragmentary walls are to be seen some three and a half miles to the north of the town. The fortress, with its sad and tragic memories of Mary Queen of Scots, was demolished after James came to the throne, and its fine oak staircase, by repute the same by which she descended to the scaffold, was re-erected in the "Talbot." The courtyard is picturesque. The old windows which light the staircase, which also are said to have come from Fotheringay, are angular at the base, and have an odd and pleasing appearance.

Two ancient almshouses, with imposing entrance gates, are well worth inspection. There is a graceful little pinnacle surmounting one of the gable ends, at which we were curiously gazing when one of the aged inmates came out in alarm to see if the chimney was on fire.

Fotheringay church, with its lantern tower and flying buttresses, is picturesquely situated close to the river Nene, and with the bridge makes a charming picture. The older bridge of Queen Mary's time was angular, with square arches, as may be seen from a print of the early part of the eighteenth century. In this is shown the same

scanty remains of the historic Castle: a wall with a couple of Gothic doorways, all that survived of the formidable fortress that was the unfortunate queen's last prison-house. As at Cumnor, where poor Amy Robsart was done to death in a manner which certainly Elizabeth hinted at regarding her troublesome cousin, there is little beyond the foundations from which to form an idea of the building. It was divided by a double moat, which is still to be seen, as well as the natural earthwork upon which the keep stood. The queen's apartments, that towards the end were stripped of all emblems of royalty, were situated above and to the south of the great hall, into which she had to descend by a staircase to the scaffold. Some ancient thorn trees now flourish upon the spot. The historian Fuller, who visited the castle prior to its demolition, found the following lines from an old ballad scratched with a diamond upon a window-pane of Mary's prison-chamber:

"From the top of all my trust
Mishap hath laid me in the dust."

Though Mary's mock trial took place at Fotheringay in the "Presence Chamber," she was actually condemned in the Star Chamber at Westminster; and it may here be stated that that fine old room may yet be seen not very many miles away, at Wormleighton, near the

Northamptonshire border of south-east Warwickshire. A farmhouse near Fotheringay is still pointed out where the executioner lodged the night before the deed; and some claim this distinction for the ancient inn in which are incorporated some remains of the castle.

As is known, the Queen of Scots' body was buried first in Peterborough Cathedral, whence it was removed to Westminster Abbey. There is a superstition in Northamptonshire that if a body after interment be removed, it bodes misfortune to the surviving members of the family. This was pointed out at the time to James I.; but superstitious as he was, he did not alter his plans, and the death of Prince Henry shortly afterwards seemed to confirm this belief.[1]

But there are other memories of famous names in history, for the head of the White Rose family, Richard of York, was buried in the church, and his duchess, Cecilia Neville, as well as Edward of York, whose death at Agincourt is immortalised by Shakespeare. When the older church was dismantled and the bodies removed to their present destination, a silver ribbon was discovered round the Duchess Cecilia's neck upon which a pardon from Rome was clearly written. The windows of the church once were rich in painted glass; and at the fine fifteenth-century font it is conjectured

[1] See *Turner's History of Remarkable Providences*, 1677.

Richard III. was baptized, for he was born at the Castle. Crookback's badge, the boar, may still be seen in the church, and the Yorkist falcon and fetterlock are displayed on the summit of the vane upon the tower. Also some carved stalls, which came from here, in the churches of Tansor and Hemington to the south of Fotheringay, bear the regal badges and crest. The falcon and the fetterlock also occur in the monuments to the Dukes of York, which were rebuilt by Queen Elizabeth when the older tombs had fallen to decay. The allegiance to the fascinating Queen of Scots is far from dead, for in February 1902, and doubtless more recently, a gentleman journeyed specially from Edinburgh to Fotheringay to place a tribute to her martyrdom in the form of a large cross of immortelles bearing the Scots crown and Mary's monogram, and a black bordered white silk sash attached.

A few miles to the west of this historic spot are the fine Tudor houses Deene and Kirby: the former still a palatial residence; the latter, alas! a ruin fast falling to decay. Deene, with its battlemented towers and turrets and buttressed walls, is a noble-looking structure, with numerous shields of arms and heraldic devices carved upon the masonry. These are of the great families, Brudenel, Montagu, Bruce, Bulstrode, etc., whose intermarriages are emblazoned in painted

glass in the top of the mullioned windows of the hall. Sir Thomas Brudenel, the first Earl of Cardigan, who died three years after the Restoration, was a typical old cavalier after the style of Sir Henry Lee in *Woodstock*; and in the manor are preserved many of his manuscripts written during his twenty years' confinement in the Tower. In the great hall there is a blocked-up entrance to a subterranean passage running towards Kirby, and through this secret despatches are said to have been carried in the time of the Civil War; and at the back of a fireplace in the same apartment is a hiding-place sufficiently large to contain a score of people standing up. One of the rooms is called Henry VII.'s room, as that monarch when Earl of Richmond is said to have ridden from Bosworth Field to seek refuge at Deene, then a monastery.

Among the numerous portraits are the Earl of Shrewsbury, who was slain by the second Duke of Buckingham in the notorious duel, and his wife Lady Anne Brudenel, who was daughter of the second Earl of Cardigan. Some time before the poor plain little duchess suspected that she had a formidable rival in the beautiful countess, she was returning from a visit to Deene to her house near Stamford, where her reckless husband just then found it convenient to hide himself, as a warrant for high treason was out against him,

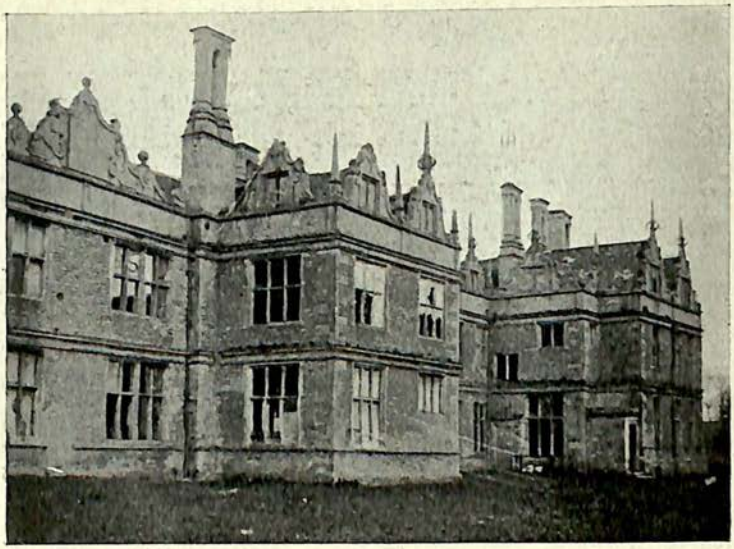
when she noticed a suspicious little cavalcade travelling in the same direction. Ordering the horses to be whipped up, she arrived in time to give the alarm. The duke had just set out for Burleigh House with some ladies in his company, and, says Clarendon, the sergeant "made so good haste that he was in view of the coach, and saw the duke alight out of the coach and lead a lady into the house, upon which the door of the court was shut before he could get to it. He knocked loudly at that and other doors that were all shut, so that he could not get into the house though it were some hours before sunset in the month of May."[1] Pepys was strolling in the park and met Sergeant Bearcroft "who was sent for the Duke of Buckingham, to have brought his prisoner to the Tower. He come to towne this day and brings word that being overtaken and outrid by the Duchesse of Buckingham within a few miles of the duke's house of Westhorp, he believes she got thither about a quarter of an hour before him, and so had time to consider; so that when he came, the doors were kept shut against him. The next day, coming with officers of the neighbour market-town [Stamford] to force open the doors, they were open for him, but the duke gone, so he took horse presently and heard upon the road that the Duke of Buckingham was

[1] *Continuation of the Life of Lord Clarendon.*

gone before him for London. So that he believes he is this day also come to towne before him; but no newes is yet heard of him."[1] Many blunders have been made in reference to the duke's house of "Westhorp." Some have called it "Owthorp" and others "Westhorpe" in Suffolk, the demolished mansion of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. The place referred to is really Wothorpe manor-house, the remains of which stand some two miles to the south of Stamford and ten to the north of Deene. The existing portion consists of four towers, the lower part of which is square and the upper octagonal, presumably having been at one time surmounted by cupolas. The windows are long and narrow, having only one mullion running parallel across. Beneath the moulding of the summit of each tower are circular loopholes. It is evidently of Elizabethan date, but much of the ornamental detail is lost in the heavy mantle of ivy and the trees which encircle it.

That that stately Elizabethan mansion, Kirby Hall (which is close to Deene), should ever have been allowed to fall to ruin is most regrettable and deplorable. It was one of John Thorpe's masterpieces, the architect of palatial Burleigh, of Holland House and Audley End, and other famous historic houses. He laid the foundation-stone in 1570, and that other great master Inigo

[1] *Diary*, 3 March 1666-67.



KIRBY HALL.

WOTHORPE MANOR-HOUSE.

Jones made additions in the reign of Charles I. The founder of Kirby was Sir Christopher Hatton, who is said to have first danced into the virgin queen's favour at a masque at Court. The Earl of Leicester probably first was famous in this way, if we may judge from the quaint painting at Penshurst, where he is bounding her several feet into the air; but was not so accomplished as Sir Christopher, who in his official robes of Lord Chancellor danced in the Hall of the Inner Temple with the seals and mace of his office before him, an undignified proceeding, reminding one of the scene in one of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

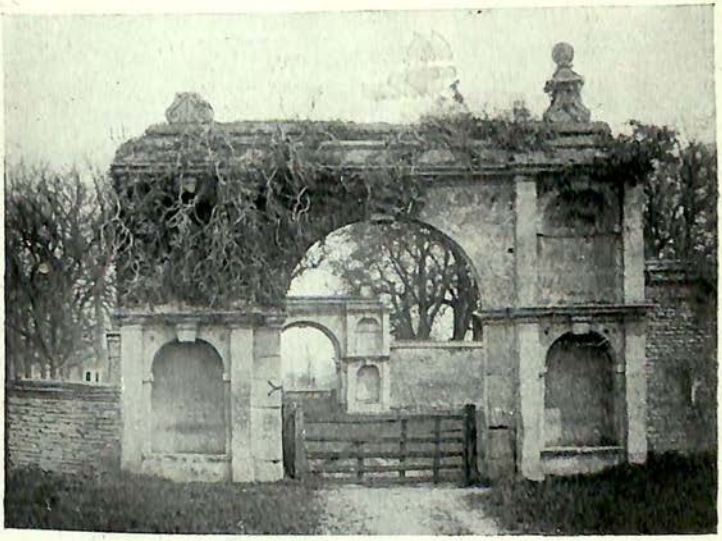
Kirby must have been magnificent in its day; and when we consider that it was in occupation by the Chancellor's descendant, the Earl of Winchelsea, in 1830 or even later, one may judge by seeing it how rapidly a neglected building can fall into decay. Even in our own memory a matter of twenty years has played considerable havoc, and cleared off half the roof. Standing in the deserted weed-grown courtyard, one cannot but grieve to see the widespread destruction of such beautiful workmanship. The graceful fluted Ionic pilasters that intersect the lofty mullioned windows are falling to pieces bit by bit, and the fantastic stone pinnacles above and on the carved gable ends are disappearing one by one. But

much of the glass is still in the windows, and some of the rooms are not all yet open to the weather, and the great hall and music gallery and the "Library" with fine bay window are both in a fair state of preservation. Is it yet too much to hope that pity may be taken upon what is undoubtedly one of the finest Elizabethan houses in England? The north part of the Inner Court is represented in S. E. Waller's pathetic picture "The Day of Reckoning," which has been engraved.

Some three miles to the south of Kirby is the village of Corby, famous for its surrounding woods, and a curious custom called the "Poll Fair," which takes place every twenty years. Should a stranger happen to be passing through the village when the date falls due, he is liable to be captured and carried on a pole to the stocks, which ancient instrument of punishment is there, and put to use on these occasions. He may purchase his liberty by handing over any coin he happens to have. It certainly is a rather eccentric way of commemorating the charter granted by Elizabeth and confirmed by Charles II. by which the residents (all of whom are subjected to similar treatment) are exempt from market tolls and jury service.

A pair of stocks stood formerly at the foot of the steps of the graceful Eleanor Cross at

DOORWAY, KIRBY HALL.



GATEWAY, KIRBY HALL.

Geddington to the south of Corby. Of the three remaining memorials said to have been erected by Edward I. at every place where the coffin of his queen rested on its way from Hardeby in Lincolnshire to Westminster Abbey, Geddington Cross is by far the most graceful and in the best condition. The other two are at Waltham and Northampton. Originally there were fifteen Eleanor crosses, including Hardeby, Lincoln, Stony Stratford, Woburn, Dunstable, St. Albans, Cheapside, and Charing Cross. The last two, the most elaborate of all, as is known, were destroyed by order of Lord Mayor Pennington in 1643 and 1647, accompanied by the blast of trumpets.

SOME SUFFOLK NOOKS

THE idea of calling pretty little Mildenhall in north-west Suffolk a town, seems out of place. It is snug and sleepy and prosperous-looking, an inviting nook to forget the noise and bustle of a town in the ordinary sense of the word. May it long continue so, and may the day be long distant when that terrible invention, the electric tram, is introduced to spoil the peace and harmony. Mildenhall is one of those old-world places where one may be pretty sure in entering the snug old courtyard of its ancient inn, that one will be treated rather as a friend than a traveller. Facing the "Bell" is the church, remarkable for the unique tracery of its early-English eastern window, and for its exceptionally fine open hammer-beam carved oak roof, with bold carved spandrels and large figures of angels with extended wings, and the badges of Henry v., the swan and antelope, displayed in the south aisle.

In a corner of the little market-square is a curious hexagonal timber market-cross of this monarch's time, roofed with slabs of lead set diagonally,

and adding to the picturesque effect. The centre part runs through the roof to a considerable height, and is surmounted by a weather-cock. Standing beneath the low-pitched roof, one may get a good idea of the massiveness of construction of these old Gothic structures; an object-lesson to the jerry builder of to-day. The oaken supports are relieved with graceful mouldings.

Within bow-shot of the market-cross is the gabled Jacobean manor-house of the Bunburys, a weather-worn wing of which abuts upon the street. The family name recalls associations with the beautiful sisters whom Goldsmith dubbed "Little Comedy" and the "Jessamy Bride." The original "Sir Joshua" of these ladies may be seen at Barton Hall, another seat of the Bunburys a few miles away, where they played good-natured practical jokes upon their friend the poet. In a room of the Mildenhall mansion hangs a portrait of a less beautiful woman, but sufficiently attractive to meet with the approval of a critical connoisseur. When the Merry Monarch took unto himself a wife, this portrait of the little Portuguese woman was sent for him to see; and presumably it was flattering, for when Catherine arrived in person, his Majesty was uncivil enough to inquire whether they had sent him a bat instead of a woman.

A delightful walk by shady lanes and corn-

fields, and along the banks of the river Lark, leads to another fine old house, Wamil Hall, a portion only of the original structure; but it would be difficult to find a more pleasing picture than is formed by the remaining wing. It is a typical manor-house, with ball-surmounted gables, massive mullioned windows, and a fine Elizabethan gateway in the lofty garden wall, partly ivy-grown, and with the delicate greys and greens of lichens upon the old stone masonry.

In a south-easterly direction from Mildenhall there is charming open heathy country nearly all the way to West Stow Hall, some seven or eight miles away. The remains of this curious old structure consist principally of the gate-house, octagonal red-brick towers surmounted by ornamental cupolas with a pinnacled step-gable in the centre and the arms of Mary of France beneath it, and ornamental Tudor brick-work above the entrance. The passage leading from this entrance to the main structure consists of an open arcade, and the upper portion and adjoining wing are of half-timber construction. This until recently has been cased over in plaster; but the towers having become unsafe, some restorations have been absolutely necessary, the result of which is that the plaster is being stripped off, revealing the worn red-brick and carved oak beams beneath. Moreover, the moat, long since

filled up, is to be reinstated, and, thanks to the noble owner, Lord Cadogan, all its original features will be most carefully brought to light. In a room above are some black outline fresco paintings of figures in Elizabethan costume, suggestive of four of the seven ages of man. Most conspicuous is the lover paying very marked attentions to a damsel who may or may not represent Henry VIII.'s sister at the time of her courtship by the valiant Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; anyway the house was built by Sir John Crofts, who belonged to the queen-dowager's household, and he may have wished to immortalise that romantic attachment. A gentleman with a parrot-like hawk upon his wrist says by an inscription, "Thus do I all the day"; while the lover observes, "Thus do I while I may." A third person, presumably getting on in years, says with a sigh, "Thus did I while I might"; and he of the "slippered pantaloon" age groans, "Good Lord, will this world last for ever!" In a room adjoining, we were told, Queen Elizabeth slept during one of her progresses through the country, or maybe it was Mary Tudor who came to see Sir John; but the "White Lady" who issues from one of the rooms in the main building at 12 o'clock p.m. so far has not been identified.

In his lordship's stables close by we had the privilege of seeing "a racer" who had won sixteen

or more "seconds," as well as a budding Derby winner of the future. Culford is a stately house in a very trim and well-cared-for park. It looks quite modern, but the older mansion has been incorporated with it. In Charles II.'s day his Majesty paid occasional visits to Culford *en route* from Euston Hall to Newmarket, and Pepys records an incident there which was little to his host's (Lord Cornwallis') credit. The rector's daughter, a pretty girl, was introduced to the king, whose unwelcome attentions caused her to make a precipitate escape, and, leaping from some height, she killed herself, "which, if true," says Pepys, "is very sad." Certainly Charles does not show to advantage in Suffolk. The Diarist himself saw him at Little Saxham Hall[1] (to the south-west of Culford), the seat of Lord Crofts, going to bed, after a heavy drinking bout with his boon companions Sedley, Buckhurst, and Bab May.

The church is in the main modern, but there is a fine tomb of Lady Bacon, who is represented lifesize nursing her youngest child, while on either side in formal array stand her other five children. Her husband is reclining full length at her feet.

Hengrave Hall, one of the finest Tudor mansions in England, is close to Culford. Shorn of

[1] The old Hall was pulled down in 1771.

its ancient furniture and pictures (for, alas! a few years ago there was a great sale here), the house is still of considerable interest; but the absence of colour—its staring whiteness and bare appearance—on the whole is disappointing, and compared with less architecturally fine houses, such as Kentwell or Rushbrooke, it is inferior from a picturesque point of view. Still the outline of gables and turreted chimneys is exceptionally fine and stately. It was built between the years 1525 and 1538. The gatehouse has remarkable mitre-headed turrets, and a triple bay-window bearing the royal arms of France and England quarterly, supported by a lion and a dragon. The entrance is flanked on either side by an ornamental pillar similar in character to the turrets. The house was formerly moated and had a drawbridge, as at Helmingham in this county. These were done away with towards the end of the eighteenth century, when a great part of the original building was demolished and the interior entirely reconstructed. The rooms included the "Queen's Chamber," where Elizabeth slept when she was entertained here after the lavish style at Kenilworth in 1578, by Sir Thomas Kytson. From the Kitsons, Hengrave came to the Darcys and Gages.

In the vicinity of Bury there are many fine old houses, but for historical interest none so interest-

ing as Rushbrooke Hall, which stands about the same distance from the town as Hengrave in the opposite direction, namely, to the south-west. It is an Elizabethan house, with corner octagonal turrets to which many alterations were made in the next century: the windows, porch, etc., being of Jacobean architecture. It is moated, with an array of old stone piers in front, upon which the silvery green lichen stands out in harmonious contrast with the rich purple red of the Tudor brickwork. The old mansion is full of Stuart memories. Here lived the old cavalier Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, who owed his advancement to Queen Henrietta Maria, to whom he acted as secretary during the Civil War, and to whom he was privately married when she became a widow and lived in Paris. He was a handsome man, as may be judged from his full-length portrait here by Vandyck, though he is said to have been somewhat ungainly. In the "State drawing-room," where the maiden queen held Court when she visited the earl's ancestor Sir Robert Jermyn in 1578, may be seen two fine inlaid cabinets of wood set with silver, bearing the monogram of Henrietta Maria. Jermyn survived his royal wife the dowager-queen over fourteen years. Evelyn saw him a few months before he died. "Met My Lord St. Albans," he says, "now grown so blind that he could not see to take his

meat. He has lived a most easy life, in plenty even abroad, whilst His Majesty was a sufferer; he has lost immense sums at play, which yet, at about eighty years old, he continues, having one that sits by him to name the spots on the cards. He eat and drank with extraordinary appetite. He is a prudent old courtier, and much enriched since His Majesty's return."[1]

Charles I.'s leather-covered travelling trunk is also preserved at Rushbrooke as well as his night-cap and night-shirt, and the silk brocade costume of his great-grandson, Prince Charles Edward. An emblem of loyalty to the Stuarts also may be seen in the great hall, a bas-relief in plaster representing Charles II. concealed in the Boscobel oak. Many of the bedrooms remain such as they were two hundred years ago, with their fine old tapestries, faded window curtains, and tall canopied beds. One is known as "Heaven" and another as "Hell," from the rich paintings upon the walls and ceilings. The royal bedchamber, Elizabeth's room, contains the old bed in which she slept, with its velvet curtains and elaborately worked counterpane. The house is rich in portraits, and the walls of the staircase are lined from floor to ceiling with well-known characters of the seventeenth century, from James I. to Charles II.'s confidant, Edward Progers, who died in 1714, at the age of ninety-six,

[1] *Evelyn's Diary*, Sept. 18, 1683.

of the anguish of cutting four new teeth.[1] Here also is Agnes de Rushbrooke, who haunts the Hall. There is a grim story told of her body being cast into the moat; moreover, there is a certain bloodstain pointed out to verify the tale.

Then there is the old ballroom, and the Roman Catholic chapel, now a billiard-room, and the library, rich in ancient manuscripts and elaborate carvings by Grinling Gibbons. The old gardens also are quite in character with the house, with its avenues of hornbeams known as Lovers' Walk, and the site of the old labyrinth or maze.

Leaving Rushbrooke with its Stuart memories, our way lies to the south-east; but to the south-west there are also many places of interest, such as Hardwick, Hawstead, Plumpton, etc. At the last-named place, in an old house with high Mansard roofs resembling a French chateau, lived an eccentric character of whom many anecdotes are told, old Alderman Harmer, one of which is that in damp weather he used to sit in a kind of pulpit in one of the topmost rooms, with wooden boots on!

For the remains of Hawstead Place, once visited in State by Queen Elizabeth, who dropped her fan in the moat to test the gallantry of her host, we searched in vain. A very old woman in mob-cap

[1] Descendants of Proger, or Progers, are still living in Bury St. Edmunds.

in pointing out the farm so named observed, "T'were nowt of much account nowadays, tho' wonderful things went on there years gone by." This was somewhat vague. We went up to the house and asked if an old gateway of which we had heard still existed. The servant girl looked aghast. Had we asked the road to Birmingham she could scarcely have been more dumbfounded. "No, there was no old gateway there," she said. We asked another villager, but he shook his head. "There was a lady in the church who died from a box on the ear!" This was scarcely to the point, and since we have discovered that the ancient Jacobean gateway *is* at Hawstead Place after all, we cannot place the Suffolk rustic intelligence above the average. It is in the kitchen garden, and in the alcoves of the pillars are moulded bricks with initials and hearts commemorating the union of Sir Thomas Cullum with the daughter of Sir Henry North. The moat is still to be seen, but the bridge spanning it has given way. The principal ruins of the old mansion were removed about a century ago.

Gedding Hall, midway between Bury and Needham Market, is moated and picturesque, and before it was restored must have been a perfect picture, for as it is now it just misses being what it might have been under very careful treatment.

A glaring red-brick tower has been added, which looks painfully new and out of keeping; and beneath two quaint old gables, a front door has been placed which would look very well in Fitz-John's Avenue or Bedford Park, but certainly not here. When old houses are nowadays so carefully restored so that occasionally it is really difficult to see where the old work ends and the new begins, one regrets that the care that is being bestowed upon West Stow could not have been lavished here.

We come across another instance of bad restoration at Bildeston. There is a good old timber house at the top of the village street which, carefully treated, would have been a delight to the eye; but the carved oak corner-post has been enveloped in hideous yellow brickwork in such a fashion that one would rather have wished the place had been pulled down. But at the farther end of the village there is another old timber house, Newbury Farm, with carved beams and very lofty porch, which affords a fine specimen of village architecture of the fifteenth century. Within, there is a fine black oak ceiling of massive moulded beams, a good example of the lavish way in which oak was used in these old buildings.

Hadleigh is rich in seventeenth-century houses with ornamental plaster fronts and carved oak beams and corbels. One with wide projecting

eaves and many windows bears the date 1676, formed out of the lead setting of the little panes of glass. Some bear fantastical designs upon the pargeting, half obliterated by continual coats of white or yellow wash, with varying dates from James I. to Dutch William.

A lofty battlemented tower in the churchyard, belonging to the rectory, was built towards the end of the fifteenth century by Archdeacon Pykenham. Some mural paintings in one of its rooms depict the adjacent hills and river and the interior of the church, and a turret-chamber has a kind of hiding-place or strong-room, with a stout door for defence. Not far from this rectory gatehouse is a half-timber building almost contemporary, with narrow Gothic doors, made up-to-date with an artistic shade of green. The exterior of the church is fine, but the interior is disappointing in many ways. It was restored at that period of the Victorian era when art in the way of church improvement had reached its lowest ebb. But the church had suffered previously, for a puritanical person named Dowsing smashed the majority of the painted windows as "superstitious pictures." Fortunately some fine linen panelling in the vestry has been preserved. The old Court Farm, about half a mile to the north of the town, has also suffered considerably; for but little remains beyond the entrance gate of

Tudor date. By local report, Cromwell is here responsible; but the place was a monastery once, and Thomas Cromwell dismantled it. It would be interesting to know if the Lord Protector ever wrote to the editor of the *Weekly Post*, to refute any connection with his namesake of the previous century. Though the "White Lion" Inn has nothing architecturally attractive, there is an old-fashioned comfort about it. The courtyard is festooned round with clematis of over a century's growth, and in the summer you step out of your sleeping quarters into a delightful green arcade. The ostler, too, is a typical one of the good old coaching days, and doubtless has a healthy distaste for locomotion by the means of petrol.

The corner of the county to the south-east of Hadleigh, and bounded by the rivers Stour and Orwell, could have no better recommendation for picturesqueness than the works of the famous painter Constable. He was never happier than at work near his native village, Flatford, where to-day the old mill affords a delightful rural studio to some painters of repute. The old timber bridge and the willow-bordered Stour, winding in and out the valley, afford charming subjects for the brush; and Dedham on the Essex border is delightful. Gainsborough also was very partial to the scenery on the banks of the Orwell.

In the churchyard of East Bergholt, near

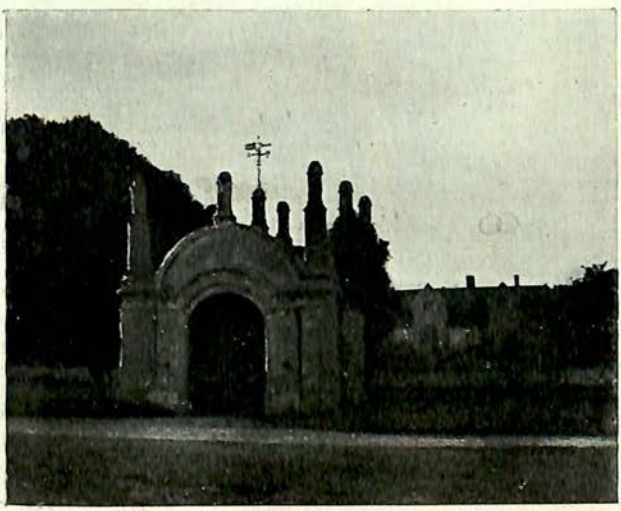
Flatford, is a curious, deep-roofed wooden structure, a cage containing the bells, which are hung upside down. Local report says that his Satanic Majesty had the same objection to the completion of the sacred edifices that he had for Cologne Cathedral, consequently the tower still remains conspicuous by its absence. The "Hare and Hounds" Inn has a finely moulded plaster ceiling. It is worthy of note that the Folkards, an old Suffolk family, have owned the inn for upwards of six generations.

Little and Great Wenham both possess interesting manor-houses: the former particularly so, as it is one of the earliest specimens of domestic architecture in the kingdom, or at least the first house where Flemish bricks were used in construction. For this reason, no doubt, trippers from Ipswich are desirous of leaving the measurements of their boots deep-cut into the leads of the roof with their initials duly recorded. Naturally the owner desires that some discrimination be now shown as to whom may be admitted. The building is compact, with but few rooms; but the hall on the first floor and the chapel are in a wonderfully good state of repair, —indeed the house would make a much more desirable residence than many twentieth-century dwellings of equal dimensions. Great Wenham manor-house is of Tudor date, with pretty little

pinnacles at the corners of gable ends which peep over a high red-brick wall skirting the highroad.

From here to Erwarton, which is miles from anywhere near the tongue of land dividing the two rivers, some charming pastoral scenery recalls peeps we have of it from the brush of Constable. At one particularly pretty spot near Harkstead some holiday folks had assembled to enjoy themselves, and looked sadly bored at a company of Salvationists who had come to destroy the peace of the scene.

Erwarton Hall is a ghostly looking old place, with an odd-shaped early-Jacobean gateway, with nine great pinnacles rising above its roof. It faces a wide and desolate stretch of road, with ancient trees and curious twisted roots, in front, and a pond: picturesque but melancholy looking. The house is Elizabethan, of dark red-brick, and the old mullioned windows peer over the boundary-wall as if they would like to see something of the world, even in this remote spot. In the mansion, which this succeeded, lived Anne Boleyn's aunt, Amata, Lady Calthorpe, and here the unfortunate queen is said to have spent some of the happiest days of girlhood,—a peaceful spot, indeed, compared with her subsequent surroundings. Local tradition long back has handed down the story that it was the queen's wish her heart should be buried at Erwarton;



ERWARTON HALL.

and it had well-nigh been forgotten, when some sixty-five years ago a little casket was discovered during some alterations to one of the walls of the church. It was heart-shaped, and contained but dust, and was eventually placed in a vault of the Cornwallis family. Sir W. Hastings D'Oyly, Bart., in writing an interesting article upon this subject a few years back,[1] pointed out that it has never been decided where Anne Boleyn's remains actually are interred, though they were buried, of course, in the first instance by her brother, Viscount Rochford, in the Tower. There are erroneous traditions, both at Salle in Norfolk and Horndon-on-the-Hill in Essex, that Anne Boleyn was buried there. There are some fine old monuments in the Erwarton church: a cross-legged crusader, and a noseless knight and lady, with elaborate canopy, members of the Davilliers family. During the Civil War five of the bells were removed from the tower and broken up for shot for the defence of the old Hall against the Parliamentarians. At least so goes the story. An octagonal Tudor font is in a good state of preservation, and a few old rusty helmets would look better hung up on the walls than placed upon the capital of a column.

The story of Anne Boleyn's heart recalls that of Sir Nicholas Crispe, whose remains were recently

[1] *The Antiquary*, vol. xxxviii.

reinterred when the old London church of St. Mildred's in Bread Street was pulled down. The heart of the cavalier, who gave large sums of money to Charles I. in his difficulties, is buried in Hammersmith Old Church, and by the instructions of his will the vessel which held it was to be opened every year and a glass of wine poured upon it.

Some curious vicissitudes are said to have happened to the heart of the great Montrose. It came into the possession of Lady Napier, his nephew's wife, who had it embalmed and enclosed in a steel case of the size of an egg, which opened with a spring, made from the blade of his sword, and the relic was given by her to the then Marchioness of Montrose. Soon afterwards it was lost, but eventually traced to a collection of curios in Holland, and returned into the possession of the fifth Lord Napier, who gave it to his daughter. When she married she went to reside in Madeira, where the little casket was stolen by a native, under the belief that it was a magic charm, and sold to an Indian chief, from whom it was at length recovered; but the possessor in returning to Europe in 1792, having to spend some time in France during that revolutionary period, thought it advisable to leave the little treasure in possession of a lady friend at Boulogne; but as luck would have it, this lady died unexpectedly,

and no clue was forthcoming as to where she had hidden the relic.

But a still more curious story is told of the heart of Louis XIV. An ancestor of Sir William Harcourt, at the time of the French Revolution had given to him by a canon of St. Denis the great monarch's heart, which he had annexed from a casket at the time the royal tombs were demolished by the mob. It resembled a small piece of shrivelled leather, an inch or so long. Many years afterwards the late Dr. Buckland, Dean of Westminster, during a visit to the Harcourts was shown the curiosity. We will quote the rest in Mr Labouchere's words, for he it was who related the story in *Truth*. "He (Dr. Buckland) was then very old. He had some reputation as a man of science, and the scientific spirit moved him to wet his finger, rub it on the heart, and put the finger to his mouth. After that, before he could be stopped, he put the heart in his mouth and swallowed it, whether by accident or design will never be known. Very shortly afterwards he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey. It is impossible that he could ever have digested the thing. It must have been a pretty tough organ to start with, and age had almost petrified it. Consequently the heart of Louis XIV. must now be reposing in Westminster Abbey enclosed in the body of an English dean."

NOOKS IN NORFOLK

WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA, on the north coast of Norfolk, sounds attractive, and looks attractive on the map; but that is about all that can be said in its favour, for a more depressing place would be difficult to find. Even Holkham, with all its art treasures, leaves a pervading impression of chill and gloom. The architects of the middle of the eighteenth century had no partiality for nooks and corners in the mansions they designed. Vastness and discomfort seems to have been their principal aim. Well might the noble earl for whom it was built have observed, "It is a melancholy thing to stand alone in one's own country." The advent of the motor car must indeed be welcome, to bring the place in touch with life.

We were attracted to the village of Stiffkey, to the east of Wells, mainly by a magazine article fresh in our memory, of some of its peculiarities, conspicuous among which was its weird red-headed inhabitants. The race of people, however, must have died out, for what few villagers

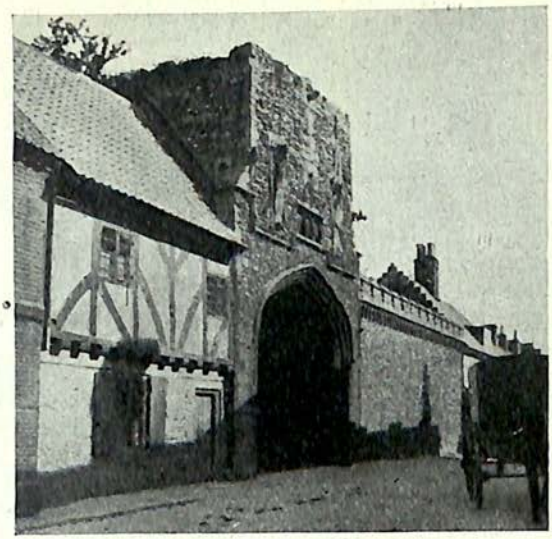
we encountered were very ordinary ones: far from ill-favoured. Possibly they still invoke the aid of the local "wise woman," as they do in many other parts of Norfolk, so therein they are no further behind the times than their neighbours.

We heard of an instance farther south, for example, where the head of an establishment, as was his wont, having disposed of his crop of potatoes, disappeared for a week with the proceeds; and returning at length in a very merry condition, his good wife, in the hopes of frightening him, unknown to him removed his watch from his pocket. Next morning in sober earnest he went with his sole remaining sixpence to consult the wise woman of the village, who promptly told him the thief was in his own house. Consequently the watch was produced, and the lady who had purloined it, instead of teaching a lesson, was soundly belaboured with a broom-handle!

Stiffkey Hall is a curious Elizabethan gabled building with a massive flint tower, built, it is said, by Sir Nathaniel Bacon, the brother of the philosopher, but it never was completed. Far more picturesque and interesting are the remains of East Barsham manor-house, some seven miles to the south of Wells. Although it contained some of the finest ornamental Tudor brickwork in England when we were there, and possibly still, the old place could have been had for a song. It

had the reputation of being haunted, and was held in awe. The gatehouse, bearing the arms and ensigns of Henry VIII., reminds one of a bit of Hampton Court, and the chimneys upon the buildings on the northern side of the Court are as fine as those at Compton Wyniates. The wonder is that in these days of appreciation of beautiful architecture nobody has restored it back into a habitable mansion. That such ruins as this or Kirby Hall or Burford Priory should remain to drop to pieces, seems a positive sin. A couple of miles to the west of Barsham is Great Snoring, whose turreted parsonage is also rich in early-Tudor moulded brickwork, as is also the case at Thorpland Hall to the south.

One grieves to think that the old Hall of the Townshends on the other side of Fakenham has been shorn of its ancestral portraits. What a splendid collection, indeed, was this, and how far more dignified did the full-length Elizabethan warriors by Janssen look here than upon the walls at Christie's a year or so ago. The famous haunted chambers have a far less awe-inspiring appearance than some other of the bedrooms with their hearse-like beds and nodding plumes. We do not know when the "Brown Lady" last made her appearance, but there are rumours that she was visible before the decease of the late Marquis Townshend. Until then the stately



WALSINGHAM.

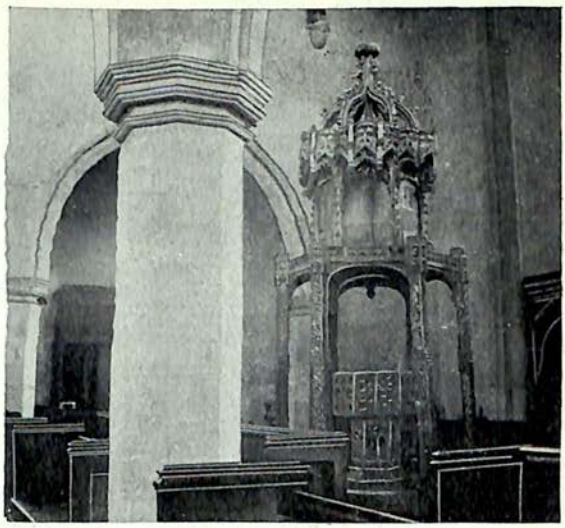
WALSINGHAM.

lady in her rich brown brocade had absented herself for half a century. She had last introduced herself unbecoming a modest ghost, to two gentlemen visitors of a house party who were sitting up late at night. One of these gentlemen, a Colonel Loftus, afterwards made a sketch of her from memory which possibly is still in existence.

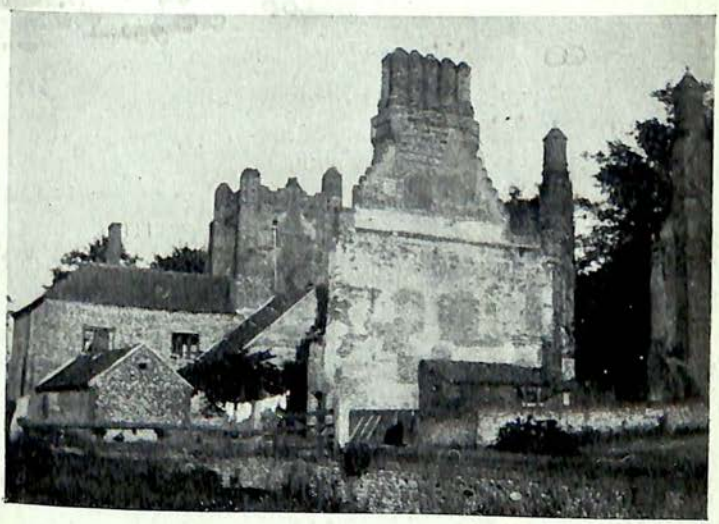
Walsingham, midway between Fakenham and Wells, is a quaint old town; its timber houses and its combined Gothic well, lock-up, and cross in the market-place giving it quite a mediæval aspect. Before the image of Our Lady of Walsingham was consigned to the flames by Wolsey's confidential servant Cromwell, the pilgrimages to the Priory were in every respect as great as those to Canterbury, and the "way" through Brandon and Newmarket may be traced like that in Kent. Notwithstanding the fact that Henry VIII. himself had been a barefoot pilgrim, and had bestowed a costly necklace on the image, his gift as well as a host of other riches from the shrine came in very handy at the Dissolution. A relic of Our Lady's milk enclosed in crystal, says Erasmus, was occasionally like chalk mixed with the white of eggs. It had been brought from Constantinople in the tenth century; but this and a huge bone of St. Peter's finger, of course, did not survive. The site of the chapel, containing the altar where

the pilgrims knelt, stood somewhere to the north-west of the ruins of the Priory. These are approached from the street through a fine old early fifteenth-century gateway. The picturesque remains of the refectory date from the previous century, the western window being a good example of the purest Gothic. The old pilgrims' entrance was in "Knight Street," which derives its name from the miracle of a horseman who had sought sanctuary passing through the extraordinarily narrow limits of the wicket. Henry III. is said to have set the fashion for walking to Walsingham, and we strongly recommend the tourists of to-day, who may find themselves stranded at Wells-next-the-Sea, to do likewise.

The little seaside resort Mundesley is an improvement on Wells; but dull as it is now, what must it have been in Cowper's time: surely a place ill-calculated to improve the poor poet's melancholia! There is little of interest beyond the ruined church on the cliffs and the Rookery Farm incorporated in the remains of the old monastery. A priest's hole is, or was not long since, to be seen in one of the gabled roofs. The churches of Trunch and Knapton to the south-west both are worth a visit for their fine timber roofs. The font at Trunch is enclosed by a remarkable canopy of oak supported by graceful wooden pillars from the floor. It is



FONT CANOPY, TRUNCH.



EAST BARSHAM MANOR.

probably of early-Elizabethan date, and is certainly one of the most remarkable baptistries in the country. Here and in other parts of Norfolk when there are several babies to be christened the ceremony is usually performed on the girls last, as otherwise when they grew up they would develop beards!

Ten miles to the south-west as the crow flies is historic Blickling, one of the reputed birthplaces of the ill-fated Anne Boleyn. By some accounts Luton Hoo in Bedfordshire claims her nativity as well as Rochford Hall in Essex and Hever Castle in Kent; but, though Hever is the only building that will go back to that date, she probably was born in the older Hall of Blickling, the present mansion dating only from the reign of James I.

Upon the occasion of our visit the house was closed, so we can only speak of the exterior, and of the very extensive gardens, where in vain we sought the steward, who was said to be somewhere on the premises.

The rampant bulls, bearing shields, perched on the solid piers that guard the drawbridge across the moat, duly impress one with the ancestral importance of the Hobarts, whose arms and quarterings, surmounted by the helmet and ancient crest, adorn the principal entrance. Like Hatfield and Bramshill, the mellowed red-brick gives it a

charm of colour which only the lapse of centuries will give; and though not so old as Knole or Hatfield, the main entrance is quite as picturesque. The gardens, however, immediately surrounding the Hall look somewhat flat in comparison.

Although Henry VIII. did the principal part of his courting at Hever, it was at Blickling that he claimed his bride, and by some accounts was married to her there and not at Calais. The old earl, the unfortunate queen's father, survived her only two years; and after his death the estate was purchased by Sir Henry Hobart,[1] who built the present noble house. Among the relics preserved at Blickling of the unhappy queen are her morning-gown and a set of night-caps, and her toilet case containing mirrors, combs, etc. Sir John the third baronet entertained Charles II. and his queen here in 1671, upon which occasion the host's son and heir, then aged thirteen, was knighted. The royal visit is duly recorded in the parish register as follows: "King Charles the Second, with Queene Katherine, and James, Duke of Yorke, accompanied with the Dukes of Monmouth, Richmond, and Buckingham, and with divers Lords, arrived and dined at Sir John Hubart's, at Blicklinge Hall, the King, Queene, Duke of

[1] The Miss Hobart who figures in de Gramont's *Memoirs* was Sir John's sister, one of the first baronet's sixteen children.

Yorke, and Duchesse of Richmond, of Buckin gham etc., in the great dining-roomes, the others in the great parloure beneath it, upon Michmasday 1671. From whence they went, the Queene to Norwich, the King to Oxneads and lodged there, and came through Blicklinge the next day about one of the clock, going to Rainham to the Lord Townsends."[1]

Queen Catherine slept that night and the following in the Duke's Palace at Norwich, but joined her royal spouse at lunch at Oxnead, which fine Elizabethan house has, alas! been pulled down, and the statues and fountain from there are now at Blickling. "Next morne (being Saterday)," writes a local scribe in 1671, "her Ma^ty^ parted so early from Norwich as to meet y^e^ King againe at Oxnead ere noone; S^r^ Rob^t^ Paston haveing got a vast dinner so early ready, in regard that his Ma^ty^ was to goe that same afternoone (as he did) twenty myles to supper to the L^d^ Townshend's, wher he stayd all yesterday, and as I suppose, is this evening already return'd to Newmarket, extremely well satisfied with our Lord Lieut^s^ reception. . . . Her Ma^ty^ haveinge but seven myles back to Norwich that night from S^r^ Rob^t^ Pastons was pleased for about two houres after dinner to divert herselfe at cards

[1] There is an illustration of the room that Monmouth slept in at Raynham upon this occasion in *King Monmouth*.

with the Court ladies and my Lady Paston, who had treated her so well and yet returned early to Norwich that eveninge to the same quarters as formerly; and on Sunday morne (after her devotions perform'd and a plentifull breakfast) shee tooke coach, extreamely satisfied with the dutifull observances of all this countie and city, and was conducted by the L^d^ Howard and his sonnes as far as Attleburough where fresh coaches atended to carry her back to the R^t^ Ho^ble^ the L^d^ Arlington's at Euston."[1]

Sidelights of this royal progress are obtained from the diarist Evelyn and Lord Dartmouth. Among the attractions provided for the king's amusement at Euston was the future Duchess of Portsmouth. The Duchess of Richmond (La belle Stuart), in the queen's train, must have been reminded how difficult had been her position before she eloped with her husband four years previously. For the duke's sake let us hope he was as overcome as his Majesty when the latter let his tongue wag with more than usual freedom during the feast at Raynham. "After her marriage," says Dartmouth, speaking of the duchess, "she had more complaisance than before, as King Charles could not forbear telling the Duke of Richmond, when he was drunk

[1] *A Narrative of the Visit of His Majesty King Charles the Second to Norwich, 1671* (1846).

at Lord Townshend's in Norfolk." Evelyn did not think much of the queen's lodgings at Norwich, which he describes as "an old wretched building," partly rebuilt in brick, standing in the market-place, which in his opinion would have been better had it been demolished and erected somewhere else.

Not far from Blickling to the north-east is Mannington Hall, a mansion built in the reign of Henry VI., which possesses one of the best authenticated ghost stories of modern times. The story is the more interesting as it is recorded by that learned and delightful chronicler Dr. Jessop, chaplain to His Majesty the King. The strange experiences of his visit in October 1879 are duly recorded in the *Athenæum* of the following January. The rest of the household had retired to rest, and Dr. Jessop was sitting up making extracts from some rare books in an apartment adjoining the library. Absorbed in his study, time had slipped away and it was after one o'clock. "I was just beginning to think that my work was drawing to a close," says the doctor, "when, as I was actually writing, I saw a large white hand within a foot of my elbow. Turning my head, there sat a figure of a somewhat large man, with his back to the fire, bending slightly over the table, and apparently examining the pile of books that I had been at work upon. The man's face was turned

away from me, but I saw his closely-cut, reddish brown hair, his ear and shaved cheek, the eyebrow, the corner of his right eye, the side of the forehead, and the large high cheekbone. He was dressed in what I can only describe as a kind of ecclesiastical habit of thick corded silk, or some such material, close up to the throat, and a narrow rim or edging of about an inch broad of satin or velvet serving as a stand-up collar and fitting close to the chin. The right hand, which had first attracted my attention, was clasping, without any great pressure, the left hand; both hands were in perfect repose, and the large blue veins of the right hand were conspicuous. I remember thinking that the hand was like the hand of Velasquez's magnificent 'Dead Knight' in the National Gallery. I looked at my visitor for some seconds, and was perfectly sure that he was a reality. A thousand thoughts came crowding upon me, but not the least feeling of alarm or even of uneasiness. Curiosity and a strong interest were uppermost. For an instant I felt eager to make a sketch of my friend, and I looked at a tray on my right for a pencil: then thought, 'Upstairs I have a sketch-book; shall I fetch it?' There he sat and I was fascinated, afraid not of his staying, but lest he should go. Stopping in my writing, I lifted my left hand from the paper, stretched it out to a pile of books and

moved the top one. I cannot explain why I did this. My arm passed in front of the figure, and it vanished. Much astonished, I went on with my writing perhaps for another five minutes, and had actually got to the last few words of the extract when the figure appeared again, exactly in the same place and attitude as before. I saw the hand close to my own; I turned my head again to examine him more closely, and I was framing a sentence to address to him when I discovered that I did not dare to speak. I was afraid of the sound of my own voice! There he sat, and there sat I. I turned my head again to my work, and finished the two or three words still remaining to be written. The paper and my notes are at this moment before me, and exhibit not the slightest tremor or nervousness. I could point out the words I was writing when the phantom came, and when he disappeared. Having finished my task I shut the book and threw it on the table: it made a slight noise as it fell—the figure vanished." Not until now did the doctor feel nervous, but it was only for a second. He replaced the books in the adjoining room, blew out the candles on the table, and retired to his rooms marvelling at his calmness under such strange circumstances.

The old-fashioned town Wymondham, to the south-west of Norwich, contains an interesting

church and market-cross, and one or two fine Gothic houses, all in good preservation. But stay, the quaint octagonal Jacobean timber structure in the market-place was holding forth a petition for contributions, as it was feeling somewhat decrepit. This was six or seven years ago, so probably by now it has entered upon a new lease of life. How much more picturesque are these old timbered structures than the jubilee clock-towers which have sprung up in many old-fashioned towns, putting everything out of harmony. But few towns are proud of their old buildings. They must be up to date with flaring red-brick, and electric tramways, and down comes everything with any claim to antiquity, without a thought of its past associations or picturesque value. But let us hope that Wymondham may be exempt from these terrible tramways for many years to come, as its population is, or was, decreasing.

The abbey and the church appear to have got rather mixed up; but having come to a satisfactory arrangement, present a most pleasing group, and, in the twilight, with two lofty towers and a ruined archway, it looks far more like a castle on the Rhine than a church in Norfolk. The effect doubtless would be heightened if we could see the rebel Kett dangling in chains from the tower as he did in the reign of Bloody Mary.

WYMONDHAM.

HAUTBOYS HALL.

(*Photo by W. B. Reefern, Esq.*)

The timber roof is exceptionally fine, with its long array of carved oak bosses and projecting angels.

Near Wymondham is the moated Hall of Stanfield, picturesque with its numerous pinnacles. Here the heroine of the delightful romance *Kenilworth* was born in 1532; but poor Amy's marriage, far from being secret, was celebrated with great pomp at Sheen in Surrey in 1550, and is recorded in the *Diary of Edward VI.* now in the British Museum. "Lydcote," the old house in North Devon where she lived for some years, was pulled down not many years ago. Her bedstead from there we believe is still preserved at Great Torrington Rectory.

Somewhat similar to Stanfield, though now only a farmhouse, is the very pretty old Tudor house Hautboys Hall. It stands a few miles to the south-east of Oxnead.

Of all the moated mansions in Norfolk, Oxburgh Hall, near Stoke Ferry, is the most interesting, and is a splendid example of the fortified manor-house of the end of the fifteenth century, and it is one of the few houses in England that have always been occupied by one family. Sir Edmund Bedingfield built it in the reign of Richard III., and Sir Richard Bedingfield resides there at the present time. The octagonal towers which flank the entrance gate rise from the broad moat to a considerable height.

There is a quaint projecting turret on the eastern side which adds considerably to the picturesque outline of stepped gables and quaint battlements. High above the ponderous oak gates the machicolation behind the arch that joins the towers shows ample provision for a liberal supply of molten lead, and in an old guard-room may be seen the ancient armour and weapons to which the retainers of the Hall were wont to have recourse in case of siege. The room recalls somehow the defence of the tower of Tillietudlem in *Old Mortality*, and one can picture the little household guard running the old culverins and sakers into position on the battlements.

The great mullioned window beneath the Tudor arch and over the entrance gate belongs to the "King's room," a fine old tapestried chamber containing the bed, with green and gold hangings, where Henry VII. slept; and it is no difficult matter to repeople it in the imagination with the inhabitants of that time in their picturesque costumes. There is a richness in the colouring of the faded tapestry and hangings in contrast with the red-brick Tudor fireplace far more striking than if the restorer had been allowed a liberal hand. It is like a bit of Haddon, and such rooms are as rarely met with nowadays as unrestored churches. The remarkable hiding-place at Oxburgh we have described in

detail elsewhere.[1] It is situated in the little projecting turret of the eastern tower, and is so cleverly constructed beneath the solid brick floor, that no one would believe until they saw the solid masonry move upwards that there was sufficient space beneath to conceal a man. The Bedingfields are an old Roman Catholic family, and it is usually in the mansions of those of that faith that these ingenious contrivances are to be seen.

A priest's hole was discovered quite recently in Snowre Hall, a curious Tudor house some ten miles to the west of Oxburgh. It is entered through a shaft from the roof, and measures five feet by six feet and four feet high, and beneath it is an inner and smaller hiding-place. Mr. Pratt (in whose family the house has been for two centuries) when he made the discovery had to remove four barrow-loads of jackdaws' nests. The discovery of this secret room is an interesting sequel to the fact that on April 29, 1646, Charles I. slept at Snowre Hall. It will be remembered that before he delivered himself up to the Scots army, he spent some days wandering about the eastern counties in disguise, like his son did in the western counties five years later. The owner of the house in those days was a Mr. Ralph Skipwith, who, to put the spies that were

[1] See *Secret Chambers and Hiding-Places.*

lurking about the vicinity off the track, provided the king with his own grey riding-jacket in place of the clergyman's black coat he was wearing, for that disguise had been widely advertised by his enemies. Dr. Hudson, who was acting as scout, joined Charles and his companion, Mr. Ashburnham, at Downham Market, where the "King's Walk" by the town side, where they met, may still be seen. It is recorded by Dr. Stukeley that Charles scratched some motto or secret instructions to his friends on a pane of glass in the Swan Inn, where he put up awaiting Hudson's return from Southwell. The fugitives proceeded thence to the Cherry Inn at Mundford, some fourteen miles from Downham, and back to Crimplesham, where they halted at an inn to effect the disguise above referred to. The regicide Miles Corbet, who was on the track with Valentine Walton, gave information as follows:

"Since our coming to Lyn we have done what service we were able. We have taken some examinations, and it doth appeare to us that Mr. Hudson, the parson that came from Oxford with the king, was at Downham in Norfolk with two other gentlemen upon Thursday the last of April. We cannot yet learn where they were Friday night; but Saturday morning, the 2 of May they came to a blind alehouse at Crimplesham,

about 8 miles from Lyn. From thence Mr. Hudson did ride on Saturday to Downham again, and there two soldiers met with him, and had private speech with him. Hudson was then in a scarlet coat. Ther he met with Mr. Ralf Skipwith of his former acquaintance, and with him he did exchange his horse; and Skipwith and the said Hudson did ride to Southrie ferrie a privat way to go towards Ely; and went by the way to Crimplesham, and ther were the other two—one in a parsons habit, which by all description was the king. Hudson procured the said Skipwith to get a gray coat for the Dr. (as he called the king), which he did. And ther the king put off his black coat and long cassock, and put on Mr. Skipwith his gray coat. The king bought a new hat at Downham, and on Saturday went into the Isle of Ely. Wherever they came they were very private and always writing. Hudson tore some papers when they came out of the house. Hudson did enquire for a ship to go to the north or Newcastel, but could get none. We hear at the same time there were 6 soldiers and officers as is thought at Oxborough at another blind ale-house."[1]

It is worthy of remark that Miles Corbet, whom Pepys saw on the morning of April 19, 1662, looking "very cheerful" upon his way to

[1] See *Memoirs of the Martyr King.*

Tyburn, was a native of Norfolk, and his monument may be seen in Sprowston Church, near Norwich.

The "Swan" at Downham still exists, but it was modernised some fifteen years ago. It would be interesting to know what became of the historical pane of glass.

NOOKS IN WARWICKSHIRE AND BORDERLAND

THE outline of Warwickshire is something in the form of a turnip, and the stem of it, which, like an isthmus, projects into Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, contains many old-world places.

Long Compton, the most southern village of all, is grey and straggling and picturesque, with orchards on all sides, and a fine old church, amid a group of thatched cottages, whose interior was restored or mangled at a period when these things were not done with much antiquarian taste. We have pleasant recollections of a sojourn at the "Old Red Lion," where mine host in 1880, a typical Warwickshire farmer, was the most hospitable and cheery to be found in this or any other county: an innkeeper of the old school that it did one's heart good to see.

But this welcome house of call is by no means the only Lion of the neighbourhood, for on the ridge of the high land which forms the boundary of Oxfordshire are the "Whispering Knights,"

the "King's Stone," and a weird Druidical circle. These are the famous Rollright Stones, about which there is a story that a Danish prince came over to invade England, and when at Dover he consulted the oracle as to the chances of success. He was told that

> "When Long Compton you shall see,
> You shall King of England be."

Naturally he and his soldiers made a bee-line for Long Compton, and, arriving at the spot where the circle is now marked by huge boulders, he was so elated that he stepped in advance of his followers, who stood round him, saying, "It is not meet that I should remain among my subjects, I will go before." But for his conceit some unkind spirit turned the whole party into stone, which doesn't seem quite fair. "King's Stone" stands conspicuous from the rest on the other side of the road, and, being very erect, looks as if the prince still prided himself upon his folly. The diameter of the circle is over a hundred feet. In an adjoining field is a cluster of five great stones. These are the "Whispering Knights"; and the secret among themselves is that they will not consent to budge an inch, and woe to the farmer who attempts to remove them. The story goes that one of the five was once carted off to make a bridge; but the offender had such

a warm time of it that he speedily repented his folly and reinstated it.

There is a delightful walk across the fields from Long Compton to Little Compton, with a glorious prospect of the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire hills. This village used to be in the former county, but now belongs to Warwickshire. Close to the quaint saddle-back towered church stands the gabled Elizabethan manor-house, with the Juxon arms carved over the entrance. Its exterior has been but little altered since the prelate lived here in retirement after the execution of Charles I. A gruesome relic was kept in one of the rooms, the block upon which the poor monarch's head was severed. This and King Charles' chair and some of the archbishop's treasured books disappeared from the manor-house after the death of his descendant Lady Fane. Internally the house has been much altered, but there are many nooks and corners to carry the memory back to the hunting bishop, for his pack of hounds was one of the best managed in the country. Upon one occasion a complaint was made to the Lord Protector that Juxon's hounds had followed the scent through Chipping Norton churchyard at the time of a puritanical assembly there. But Oliver would hear none of it, and only replied, "Let the bishop enjoy his hunting unmolested."

When Little Compton church had an Independent minister to hold forth to the congregation, the prelate held divine service every Sunday at Chastleton, the grand old home of the loyalist family of Jones. This stately Jacobean mansion is close to Little Compton, but is really in Oxfordshire. It has an old-world charm about it entirely its own; and few ancestral homes can take us back to the days of Cavalier and Roundhead with such realism, for the old furniture and pictures and relics have never been disturbed since the house was built by Walter Jones between the years 1603 and 1630. He purchased the estate from Robert Catesby, the projector of the Gunpowder Plot, who sold the manor to provide funds for carrying on that notorious conspiracy.

The great hall is a noble apartment, with raised daïs and carved screen; and the Royalist Joneses looking down upon you on all sides, conspicuous among whom is Thomas Jones and valiant Captain Arthur Jones, whose sword beside him shows the good service he did at Worcester fight. When the day was lost, and Charles was journeying towards Boscobel, the captain managed to ride his tired horse back to Chastleton. But a party of Cromwellian soldiers were at his heels, and his wife had only just time to hurry him into an ingeniously contrived hiding-place when the enemy confronted her, and refused

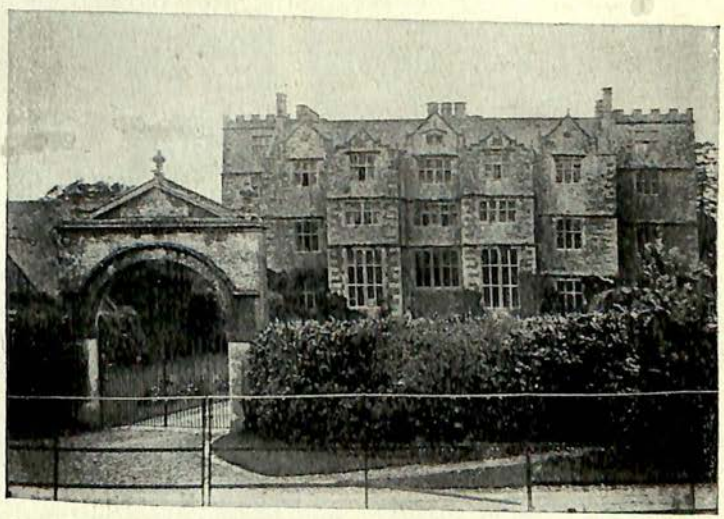
to budge from the very bedroom behind whose panelled walls the fugitive was secreted. But Mrs. Arthur Jones had her share of tact, and in preparing her unwelcome guests some refreshment, she added a narcotic to the wine, which in time had effect. Her husband was then released, and with a fresh horse he was soon beyond danger. The little oak wainscoted chamber and the adjoining bedroom may still be seen where this exciting episode took place. The drawing-room is very rich in oak carvings, and the lofty marble chimney-piece bears in the centre the Jones' arms. The ceiling with its massive pendants is a fine example of the period.[1] The bedrooms are all hung with the original tapestry and arras that was made for them. One of them contains the State bed from old Woodstock Palace; and there are everywhere antique dressing-tables, mirrors, and quaint embroidered coverlets, and old chests and cabinets innumerable containing queer old dresses and coats of the Georgian period, and, what is more remarkable, the identical Jacobean ruffs and frills which are depicted in the old portraits in the hall. Then there are cupboards full of delightful old china, and decanters and wine glasses which were often produced to drink a health to the "King over the water." But of more direct historic interest is Charles I.'s Bible,

[1] There is an engraving of this room in Nash's *Mansions*.

which was given by the widow of the last baronet of the Juxon family—a grand-nephew of the archbishop—to the then proprietor of Chastleton, John Jones. It is bound in gold stamped leather, and bears the Royal arms with the initials C. R. It is dated 1629, and is full of queer old maps and illustrations, and upon the fly-leaf is written—"Juxon, Compton, Gloucestershire."

Some of the ancient cabinets at Chastleton are full of secret drawers, and in one of them some years ago a very curious miniature of the martyr king was discovered. It is painted on copper, and represents Charles I. with the Order of St. George, and a set of designs drawn on talc, illustrating the life of the ill-fated monarch from his coronation to his execution. They are thus described by one of the past owners of Chastleton: "They consist of a face and bust in one miniature, in a case accompanied with a set of eight or nine pictures drawn on talc, being different scenes or dresses, which are to be laid on the miniature so that the face of the miniature appears through a hole left for that purpose: and thus the one miniature does duty in every one of the talc pictures. These were accidentally discovered some twenty years ago.[1] The miniature was well known, and was supposed to be complete in itself; but one day whilst being handled by

[1] The description was written more than twenty years ago.



CHASTLETON.

one of the family, then quite a child, it fell to the ground, and being in that way forced open at the back, those talc pictures were brought to light. The careful manner in which they had been concealed, and the miniature thereby made to appear no more than an ordinary portrait, seems to warrant the suggestion that they were in the first instance the property of some affectionate adherent of Charles, whose prudence persuaded him to conceal what his loyalty no doubt taught him to value very highly. There is no direct evidence to show that they belonged to Bishop Juxon; nor is there any tradition that I ever heard connected with them. The two concluding pictures of the series represent the decapitated head in the hand of the executioner, and a hand placing the martyr's crown upon the brows."

There are two huge oak staircases running up to the top of the house, where is the old gallery or ballroom, with a coved ceiling of ornamented plaster-work, and above the mullioned windows grotesque monster heads devised in the pargeting.

The grounds and gardens are quite in character: not made to harmonise, as are so many gardens nowadays, but the original quaint cut box hedges and trim walks. The grand old house in the centre with its rusty roof of lichen, and hard by the little church nestling by its side with the

picturesque entrance gateway and dovecot, form together a delightful group. Chastleton church contains some good brasses. The tower is oddly placed over the south porch.

A couple of miles to the north, and the same distance beyond, are two other interesting manor-houses, Barton-on-the-Heath and Little Woolford. The former, a gabled Jacobean house, was once the seat of the unfortunate Sir Thomas Overbury, who was done to death in the Tower by the machinations of that evil couple, Carr, Earl of Somerset, and his countess. Overbury, it will be remembered, had written the Court favourite's love letters and poems, and knew too much of that guilty courtship.

There are some good monuments to the Overburys in the church: a Norman one with saddle-back tower. Near here is the Four-Shire Stone, described by Leland as "a large bigge stone; a Three-Mile-Stone from Rollerich Stones, which is a very mark or line of Gloucestershire, Whichester (Worcestershire), Warwickshire, and Oxfordshire."

Little Woolford manor-house, the old seat of the Ingrams, is now, or was some years ago, used as a school. It is very picturesque, and its gables of half-timber, facing the little courtyard, remind one of the quadrangle of Ightham Mote. Opposite the Tudor entrance-gate is the hall, with its

open timber roof, minstrels' gallery, panelled walls, and tall windows, still containing their ancient painted glass. Barton, which properly should have its ghost, presumably is not so favoured; but here there are two at least,—a certain "White Lady," who, fortunately for the juvenile scholars, does not appear until midnight; and the last of the Ingrams, who has a restless way of tearing about on horseback in the adjacent fields. This gentleman could not die decently in his bed, but must needs, upon the point of dying, rush into the stable, mount his favourite steed, and plunge into the raging tempest to meet his adversary Death. What a pity there are not more educational establishments like this. They might possibly make the pupils less matter-of-fact and more imaginative. But we had almost forgotten a moral lesson that is to be learned from a rude projection in the masonry on the left-hand side of the entrance gateway. This is the oven, which opens at the back of a wide hearth; and here some seventeenth-century I O U's are said to have been found for money lost at play; while some Cavaliers were concealed there in the time of the Civil Wars. But the punishment for gambling was providentially arranged. Some Cromwellian soldiers dropping in at the manor-house, lighted a tremendous fire, and gave the unfortunate fugitives a roasting which they did

not readily forget. This is roughly as the story goes; indeed it goes further, for by local report King Charles himself was one of the victims.

Brailes, a few miles to the north-east, is famous for its church, the cathedral of southern Warwickshire; but it is principally interesting exteriorly, the old benches having been long since cleared away and many nineteenth-century "improvements" made. Still there are parts of the fourteenth-century roof and a fine font, some ancient monuments, particularly melodious old bells; and the lofty embattled fifteenth-century tower is exceptionally graceful.

Buried in a hollow, and hidden from view by encircling trees and hills, is that wonderful old mansion Compton Wyniates. The name (derived from the ancient family of Compton and Wyniates, a corruption of vineyard, for at an early period the vine was here cultivated) is suggestive of something quaint, and indeed a more curious old house could not be found. Its innumerable gables and twisted chimneys seem to be heaped up in the most delightful confusion, in abandoned opposition to any architectural regularity. The eye wanders from tower and turret until it becomes bewildered by so many twists and angles. Look at the square box of a house like Moor Park, for example, and wonder how it is that having arrived at such picturesque perfection, taste should so degenerate.

But half the fascination of Compton Wyniates is its colour; its time-worn dark-red brick and the grey-green lichens of ancient roofs. Upon one side the curious gables and countless chimney clusters are reflected in the moat, part of which now does service as a sunken garden.

Passing through the bullet-battered door of the main entrance, over which are the Royal arms of England supported by a griffin and a dog, we enter a quadrangular court and thence pass into the great hall, with its open timber roof black with the smoke of centuries. The screen beneath the music gallery is elaborately carved with leaf tracery, grotesque figures of mounted knights, and the escutcheon of the Compton arms. Above the gallery we notice the huge oak beams which form the half-timber portion of one of the principal gables, and cannot help comparing these tremendous oak trunks with the modern laths plastered in front of houses: a futile attempt to imitate this popular style, without aiming at its *object*—strength.

The screen of the chapel, like that of the hall, is ornamented with grotesque carvings, including a battle royal between some monks and his Satanic Majesty, who by the way has one of the ninety rooms all to himself, and reached by a special spiral staircase. Near the "Devil's chamber" is another small room whose ghostly

occupant is evidently a member of the fresh-air league, for he will persist in having the window open, and no matter how often it is closed it is always found to be open. What a pity this sanitary ghost does not take up his abode where oxygen is scarcer. But these are by no means the only mysterious rooms at Compton Wyniates, for not a few have secret entrances and exits, and one dark corridor is provided with a movable floor, which when removed, drawbridge fashion, makes an excellent provision for safety so long as you are on the right side of the chasm. Such ingenious arrangements were as necessary in a private residence, miles from anywhere, as the bathroom is in a suburban villa. There are secret "barracks" in the roof, with storage for a regiment of soldiers, if necessary. The popish chapel, too, has ample provision for the security of its priest. There are four staircases leading up to it, and a regular rabbit-warren between the beams of the roof and the wainscoting, where if needs be he could run in case of danger.

"Henry VIII.'s room," and "Charles I.'s room," are both pointed out. The latter slept a night here prior to the battle of Edgehill, and the bluff king honoured the builder of the mansion, Sir William Compton, with a visit in memory of old days, when his host as a boy had been his page. Dugdale tells us that Sir William got his

building material from the ruinous castle of Fulbrooke, so his bricks were mellowed with time when the house was first erected. The knight's grandson became Baron Compton in Elizabeth's reign, and his son William, Earl of Northampton in 1618. A romantic episode in the life of this nobleman was his elopement with Elizabeth Spencer of Canonbury Tower, Islington. The lady was a very desirable match, being the only daughter of Sir John Spencer, the richest heiress of her time. Notwithstanding her strict seclusion at Canonbury, Lord William Compton, of whom she was enamoured, succeeded in the absence of her father in gaining admission to the house in the disguise of a baker, and carried her off in his basket. To perform so muscular a feat was proof enough of his devotion, so at the end of a year all was forgotten and forgiven. Their son, the valiant second earl, Spencer Compton, won his spurs and lost his life fighting for the king at Hopton Heath. His portrait by Janssen may be seen at Castle Ashby.

His son James, the third earl, also fought for Charles, and attended his son at the Restoration; but his younger brother Henry, Bishop of London, aided the Revolution, and crowned Dutch William and his queen.

Only within the last half-century has the mansion been occupied as a residence. For

nearly a century before it was neglected and deserted. The rooms were bare of furniture, for, alas! its contents, including Henry VIII.'s State bed, had been removed or sold. That delightful writer William Howitt in 1840 said the house had not been inhabited for ninety years, with the exception of a portion of the east front, which was used by the bailiff. The rooms were empty and the walls were naked. His concluding wish fortunately long since has been realised—namely, that its noble owner would yet cause the restoration and refitting of Compton Wyniates to all its ancient state.

Warwickshire is rich in ancestral houses and mediæval castles. Take, for example, the fortresses of Kenilworth, Warwick, Maxstoke, and Tamworth, or the fine old houses Coombe Abbey, Charlecote, and Baddesley Clinton. The last named perhaps is least known of these, but by no means the least interesting. This old moated Hall of the Ferrers family is buried in the thickly wooded country on the high tableland which occupies the very heart of England. As to the actual centre, there are two places which claim this distinction; but oddly enough they are quite twelve miles apart. The one between Leamington and Warwick, the other to the west of Coventry. The latter spot is marked by the village cross of Meriden, and the former by an old oak tree by the main road.

Baddesley Clinton is nearly equidistant from both, south of Meriden and north-west of Leamington and Warwick.

Few houses so thoroughly retain their ancient appearance as Baddesley. It dates from the latter part of the fifteenth century, and is a singularly well-preserved specimen of a moated and fortified manor-house of that period. Like Compton Wyniates, its situation is very secluded in its densely wooded park, and formerly there was a double moat for extra defence; but for all its retiredness and security, the old house has a kindly greeting for those who are interested in such monuments of the past. A stone bridge across the moat leads to a projecting embattled tower with a wide depressed archway, showing provision for a portcullis with a large mullioned window over it. In general appearance the front resembles the moated house of Ightham, with which it is coeval, and the half-timbered gables of the courtyard are somewhat similar. Unlike Charlecote, the interior is as untouched as the exterior. Everywhere there are quaint old "linen" panelled rooms and richly carved chimney-pieces—windows of ancient heraldic glass, and old furniture, tapestry, and paintings. The hall is not like some, that never look cosy unless there is a blazing log fire in the hearth. There is something particularly inviting in this old room, with its deep-recessed mullioned

window by the great freestone Jacobean fireplace. What pictures could not the imagination conjure up in this cosy corner in the twilight of an autumn day! On the first floor over the entrance archway is the "banqueting-room," with high coved ceiling and tapestry-lined walls. Beyond this is "Lord Charles' room," haunted, it is said, by a handsome youth with raven hair. Many years ago this spectre was seen by two of the late Mr. Marmion Ferrers' aunts when they were children, and they long remembered his face and steadfast gaze. A mysterious lady dressed in rich black brocade is occasionally encountered in the corridors in broad daylight, like the famous "Brown Lady" of Raynham Hall.

The ancient chapel was set up by Sir Edward Ferrers when the little parish church was taken from the family at the Reformation. In the thickness of the wall close at hand there is a secret passage which leads down to a little water-gate by the moat beneath which a narrow passage runs, so that there were two ready means of escape in troublous times; and in the roof on the east side of the house there is a priest's hole provided with a fixed bench. Marmion Ferrers above alluded to, who died in 1884, was the eighth in descent from father to son from Henry Ferrers of Elizabeth's time. Both were learned antiquarians. Marmion Ferrers was a

typical squire of the old school, and we well remember with what pride he showed us round his ancestral home. But his pride ended there, as is shown by the following anecdote. One day he encountered an old woman in the park who had been gathering sticks without permission. She dropped her heavy bundle and was about to offer apologies for trespassing, when the good old squire, seeing that her load was too much for her strength, without a word slung the burden on his shoulder and carried it to the woman's humble dwelling.

This calls to mind a story of a contemporary squire who lived some fifty miles away in the adjoining county, an antiquary who was also known for his acts of kindness and hospitality. In the vicinity of his ancient Hall a tramp had found a job, and the baronet was anxious to test his butler's honesty. He therefore offered to lend the man a hand and help him carry some bundles of faggots into an adjacent yard, if he would share profits. This was agreed upon, and when the work was done the tramp went off to the Hall to ask for his money, promising to join his assistant in a lane at the back of the house. Meanwhile the squire hurried to his study, and when the butler made his appearance handed him five shillings. Then donning his shabby coat and hat he hastened back. Presently the tramp came up with beaming countenance and held out

half a crown, saying they were both well rewarded with one and threepence each. But the assistant grumbled, and said it was miserable pay, and at length persuaded the man to return and ask to see the squire and explain the amount of work that had been done. Again he returned to his sanctum, and hearing the bell ring told the butler to admit the man, and he would hear what he had to say. Having enjoyed the fun—the tramp's surprise and the butler's discomfort, he dismissed them both—one with half a guinea, the other from his service.

Baddesley Clinton church, shut in by tall trees a bow-shot from the Hall, is famous for its eastern window of heraldic glass, which shows the various noble families with whom the Ferrers intermarried. By the union of Marmion Ferrers' father with the Lady Harriet Anne, daughter of the second Marquis Townshend, the Chartley and Tamworth lines of the family were united with that of Baddesley. The altar tomb of Sir Edward Ferrers, Knight, the founder of the family at Baddesley, his wife Dame Constance, and son who predeceased him, has above shields of the alliances with the Bromes, Hampdens, etc. He was the son of Sir Henry Ferrers, Knight, of Tamworth Castle, and grandson of William, Lord Ferrers of Groby. . Marmion was the thirteenth in descent from this Sir Edward, not

many links between the fifteenth and end of the nineteenth century. The day of the good old squire's burial on August 25, 1884, fell upon the three hundred and forty-ninth anniversary of the death of the first Ferrers of Baddesley.

SOME NOOKS IN WORCESTERSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Not far from Powick Bridge, where after two hours' hard fighting the Royalists were defeated by General Fleetwood, stands a quaint old house of timber and plaster, with nine gables facing three sides of the compass, and a high three-gabled oaken porch in front. It is called Priors Court, or the White House of Pixham, and since "the battle of Powick Bridge" it has been occupied by the same family, though the name by intermarriage has changed from time to time. A branch of the Lanes of Bentley were the representatives in the seventeenth century, and according to tradition the famous Jane Lane lived here for a time. Though the house belongs to the Tudor period, many alterations were made early in the eighteenth century, but the little interior quadrangle remains much in its original condition. One expects to find within, the usual comfortable chimney corners and cosy panelled rooms, and perhaps some ancient furniture; but it comes as

a surprise to find a museum of relics and heirlooms taking us back to the days of the Tudors and Stuarts.

From the hall, we pass up the great oak staircase to bedrooms and corridors containing chests and cabinets full of ancient deeds and manuscripts, not the least remarkable of which is a parchment roll upon which is painted a series of mysterious astrological and other pictures, supposed once upon a time to have been the property of the necromancer Dr. John Dee, who lived for some time in the neighbouring town of Upton-on-Severn. If this is really a document of Dr. Dee's, one would like to see it preserved with the famous crystal in the British Museum. The old presses and cupboards are full of the richly embroidered bed-hangings and homespun sheets wrought by the ladies of the house in the days when their energies were devoted to domestic purposes, and the idea of hockey or ladies' clubs would have made their hair to stand erect. There are piles of arras carefully packed away when wall-paper came in fashion. There are chairs and tables dating back three centuries or more, and mirrors which have reflected fair faces patched, with headgear piled up mountain high.

In a corner stands a spinning-wheel, distaff, and reel complete, as if some dainty damsel at work had fled at the approach of footsteps; and there

beyond is a dusty pillion which conjures up a picture of Mistress Lane seated behind "Will Jackson" upon their way to Bristol. The ancient glass and china, too, would whet the appetite of the most exacting connoisseur. But we must not linger longer, or we shall envy these choice possessions.

Pirton Court, not far away, has not been plastered over like many houses with elaborate wooden "magpie" work beneath, and the ornamental timber in circular design is unimpaired. But the quaintest timber gables were those at Severn End, the ancient seat of the Lechmeres, some five miles to the south-west. Alas! that this ancient mansion should have been destroyed by fire,—a loss as great as that of Clevedon or Ingestre, greater, perhaps, as its architecture was so quaint: a delightful mixture of the Tudor and Stuart periods to which it was no easy matter to fix a date, for the timber portions looked much older than the seventeenth century, when they were built by Sir Nicholas Lechmere, a nephew of Sir Thomas Overbury, a worthy and learned judge whose manuscripts give a very realistic peep into the domestic life of the times and the orderly way in which his establishment was conducted. Both front and back of the house were strikingly picturesque, but the front was the most curious, half black and white angular

PIRTON COURT.

THE WHITE HOUSE, PIXHAM.

gables and half curved and rounded red-brick Jacobean gables. On either side of the entrance porch were two great chimney-stacks, and in the corners where the wings abutted, small square towers, one of which was sharpened to a point like a lead pencil. At the back, facing smooth lawns (where the judge used to sit and study), attached to the main building was what looked like a distinct structure, the sort of overhanging half-timbered house with carved barge-boards, pendants, and hip-knobs that are familiar objects at Shrewsbury or Tewkesbury. The lower part of this was of red-brick, and beside it on the right was a smaller abutting half-timber gable. The great oak staircases had fantastic newels and balusters, and around the panelled hall was a fixed oak settle, and armour on the walls: carved oak cabinets and chairs, and tables. The room in which Charles I. slept was pointed out, and that of Major-General Massey, for Severn End was that great soldier's headquarters before the battle of Worcester.

A few miles to the south-west, within the boundary of the once wild district, Malvern Chase, is another remarkable old house, Birtsmorton Court, a moated and fortified manor-house in a singularly good state of preservation. Though quiet and peaceful enough, its embattled gateway has a formidable look, showing the teeth

of its portcullis, like a bull-dog on the alert for intruders. The drawbridge is also there, and walls of immense thickness, both speaking of the insecurity of the days when it was built. The "parlour," with windows looking out upon the moat, is richly panelled with the various quarterings of the ancient lords, the Nanfans, executed in colours around the cornice. The arms and crest also occur upon the elaborately carved oak fireplace. On the left-hand side of this fireplace there was formerly the entrance to a hiding-place concealed in the wainscoting, but there is nothing now but a very visible cupboard which leads nowhere. Tradition asserts that Henry v.'s old associate, Sir John Oldcastle, sought refuge here before he was captured and burned as a Lollard. But as that happened in 1417, the date does not tally with the period to which the room belongs, namely, a century later. But the original apartments have been divided (some are dilapidated chambers, now used as a storeroom for Gloucester cheeses), so that it is difficult to trace how they were placed. There is also a story of a passage running beneath the moat into the adjacent woods; but whether Sir John got so far, or whether after his escape from the Tower he even got farther than his own castle of Cowling in Kent, when he was hunted down by orders of his former boon companions, we cannot say. By

SEVERN END.

SEVERN END.

local report Edward IV. and Margaret of Anjou as well as the little Lancastrian Prince of Wales sought shelter at Birtsmorton. But for Margaret another house nearer Tewkesbury claims the honour of offering a refuge from the battlefield. This is an old timber-framed building with carved barge-boards, near the village of Bushley, called Payne's Place, or Yew Tree Farm, which once belonged to Thomas Payne and Ursula his wife, whose brasses may be seen in the church. In the eastern wing of this old house Queen Margaret's bedroom is pointed out. The hall with open timber roof is still intact but divided, and upon the oak beams a century after the battle of Tewkesbury the following lines were painted on a frieze:

"To lyve as wee shoulde alwayes dye it were a goodly trade,
To change lowe Death for Lyfe so hye, no better change is made;
For all our worldly thynges are vayne, in them is there no truste,
Wee see all states awhyle remayne, and then they turn to duste."

Had the lines existed then, would the poor queen have derived comfort when the news reached her of her son's death on the battlefield?

Birtsmorton is associated with the early career of Cardinal Wolsey, for here he acted as chaplain during the retirement of Sir Richard Nanfan from service to the State. Through Sir Richard's Court

influence Wolsey was promoted to the service of Henry VIII.

The "Bloody Meadow" near Birtsmorton must not be confused with that near Tewkesbury, the scene of the last battle between the Houses of York and Lancaster. This one was the scene of a single combat between a Nanfan and his sister's lover, in which the latter was slain. The heart-broken lady left a sum of money that a sermon should be annually preached at Berrow church (the burial-place of the Nanfans) against duelling; and this we believe is done to this day. The cruciform church has been painfully restored, but contains a fine altar-tomb to Sir John, Sir Richard Nanfan's grandfather, Squire of the Body to King Henry VI.; but beyond a leper's window and a queer old alms-box there is nothing else remarkable.

Two of the prettiest villages hereabouts are Ripple and Strensham, the former on the Severn, the latter on the Avon. At Ripple, in a cosy corner backed by creeper-grown timber cottages, is the lofty stone shaft of the cross, and by the steps at the base the stocks and whipping-post. Strensham is famous as the birthplace of the witty author of *Hudibras*. It is a peaceful little place, with a few thatched cottages, a fine old church near the winding river, embosomed in trees. The church is remarkable for its fine

rood-loft with painted panels of saints, which at some time has been made into a gallery at the west end, and we hope may be replaced one of these days.

Following the river Avon to Evesham and Stratford-on-Avon, there are many charming old-world villages rich in timber and thatched cottages. Such a village is Offenham above Evesham. The village street leads nowhere, and at the end of it stands a tapering Maypole, as much as to say, "Go on with your modern improvement elsewhere if you like, but here I intend to stay"; and we believe it is duly decorated and danced around in the proper fashion, though the inhabitants by the "new style" of the calendar can scarcely dispense with overcoats. We will not follow the course of the river so far as "drunken Bidford" (where the immortal 'bard and some convivial friends are said to have been overcome by the effects of the strong ale at the "Falcon"), but turn our steps southwards to Broadway, which of recent years has had an invasion from America. But the great broad street of substantial Tudor and Jacobean houses deserves all the praise that has been lavished upon it. We were there before it had particularly attracted Jonathan's eye, and after a fortnight's fare of bread and cheese and eggs and bacon (the usual fare of a walking tour), we alighted upon a princely pigeon pie at the "Lygon Arms." Under

such circumstances one naturally grows enthusiastic; but even if the fine old hostelry had offered as cold a reception as that at Stilton, we could not but help feeling kindly disposed towards so stately a roadside inn. Like the "Bell" at Stilton, it is stone-built, with mullioned windows and pointed gables; but here there is a fine carved doorway, which gives it an air of grandeur. There are roomy corridors within, leading by stout oak doors to roomier apartments, some oak panelled, and others with moulded ceilings and carved stone fireplaces. One of these is known as "Cromwell's room," and one ought to be called "Charles' room" also, for during the Civil Wars the martyr king slept there on more than one occasion. The wide oak staircase with its deep set window on the first landing, reminds one of the staircase leading out of the great hall of Haddon. There is a little wicket gate to keep the dogs below. Farther up the village street stands Tudor House, which with its ball-surmounted gable ends and bay-window with heraldic shields above, bears a cloak-and-rapier look about it; but it was built, according to the date upon it, when the old Cavalier was poor and soured, and had sheathed his sword, but nevertheless was counting the months when the king should come to his own again. The house was empty, and presumably had been shut up for years. Referring to some notes, we find the

RIPPLE.

STANTON.

following memoranda by the friend who was with us upon the occasion of our visit. "We could obtain no information as to the ownership, or still more important, the holder of the keys. One old man, who might have remembered it being built but was slightly hazy on the subject, said no one ever went inside. Other inquiries in the village led only to intense astonishment at our desire. And the whole concluded in a large contingent of the inhabitants standing speechless, marvelling before the house itself; in which position we left them and it."

The old church of Edward IV.'s time is now, or was, deserted in favour of an early-Victorian one much out of keeping with the village, or rather town that it once was.

Another decayed town, once of more importance still, is Chipping Campden, four miles to the north-east of Broadway, in a corner of Gloucestershire. Here again we have the great wide street with a profusion of grey stone gables on either side, and projecting inn signs, and sundials in profusion. At one extremity a noble elm tree and at the other a huge chestnut, stand like sentinels over the ancient buildings that they may not share the fate of the neighbouring manor-house, which was burned down by its loyal owner, the third Viscount Campden, during the Civil War, to save it from the ignoble fate of being seized and garrisoned for

the Parliamentarians. From the imposing entrance gate and two remaining curious pavilions at either end of a long terrace, one may judge it must have been a fine early-Jacobean mansion. Strange that Campden House, their ancient town residence, should have perished in the flames also, but over two centuries afterwards. Near the entrance gate are the almshouses, a very picturesque line of pointed gables and lofty chimneys. Above them rises the graceful early-Perpendicular church tower, which in design and proportions is worthy of a cathedral. But the quaint Jacobean pillared market-house, the Court-house with its handsome panelled buttresses, and a house, of the time of Richard III. with two-storied bay-window, and an ancient hall, are among the most interesting buildings in the town. One of the many sign-boards displays a poetic effusion by a Campden chimney-sweep, a modernised version of the original which ran as follows:

> "John Hunter Campden doe live here,
> Sweeps chimbleys clean and not too deare.
> And if your chimbley be a-fire,
> He'll put it out, if you desire."

The "Red Lion" is a typical hostelry of the Stuart days, and a contemporary house opposite, bearing the date 1656, is well worth notice: the "Green Dragon" also, dated 1690.

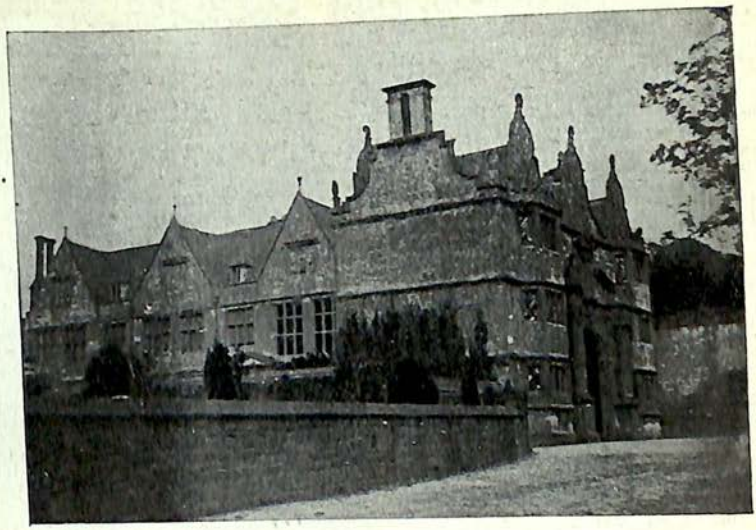
The interior of the church is disappointing; its new benches, windows, roof, and chancel giving it a modern look; but there are some fine old monuments to the ancient lords of the manor, especially that of the first Viscount Campden and his countess, and there are some fine fifteenth-century brasses in the chancel.

Norton House, to the north of the town, near Dover Hill (famous for the Cotswold games in "the good old days"), is a picturesque, many-gabled house; and at Mickleton, to the north-east, there are some curious old buildings. Farther north are the remains of Long Marston manor-house, still containing the roasting-jack which Charles II. as pseudo scullery-man omitted to wind up, and brought the wrath of the cook upon his head, much as King Arthur did when he burnt the cakes. But our way lies southwards through Broadway to Buckland, Stanton, and a place that should be sylvan according to its name—Stanway-in-the-Woods. Buckland church and rectory are both of interest. The former has a fine Perpendicular tower with some grotesque gargoyle demons at the corners. The benches are good, and a window dated 1585 retains some ancient painted glass, as the roof does its old colouring, in which the Yorkist rose is conspicuous. The hall of the rectory has a fine open-timber roof with central arch richly carved, and upon a window is

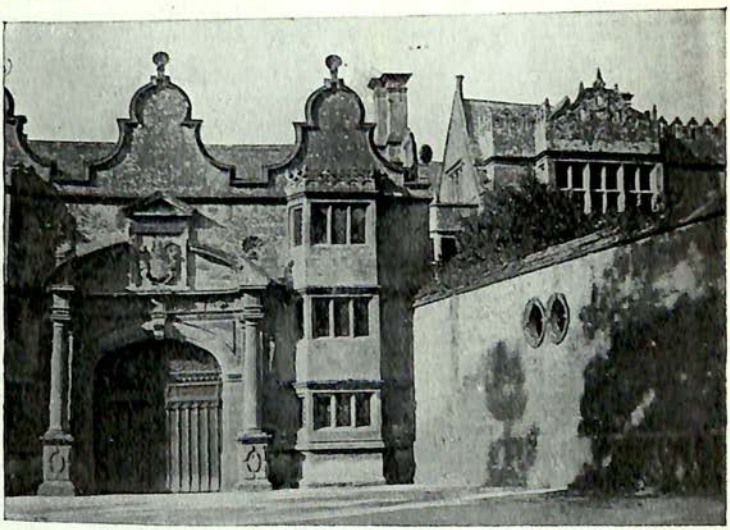
depicted a rebus representing one William Grafton, rector of Buckland from 1450 to 1506. The manor-house also once possessed a hall with lofty timber-framed roof and huge fireplace of the fourteenth century; but, sad to relate, it was destroyed when the house was modernised some years ago, but there still remains a pretty old staircase of a later date.

Farther south the country becomes more wooded and hilly. The high ground rises on the left above Stanton, and at the foot of the hill near the village nestle the pretty old church and gabled manor-house, with its complement of old farm buildings adjacent. The village street, like Broadway, consists of rows of grey stone gables, at the end of which stands the sundial-surmounted cross. The interior of the church has not been spoiled; the carved oak canopied pulpit towering above the ancient pews is quite in keeping with the old-world village. The Stanways are about two miles to the south, but there are so few houses that one wonders where the children come from to attend the village school. Wood Stanway is not disappointing like many places possessing picturesque names that we could quote, for it is enveloped in trees, and so is Church Stanway for that matter.

Turning a corner of the road one comes suddenly upon a wonderful old gateway with



STANWAY HOUSE.



STANWAY HOUSE.

fantastic gables and a noble Jacobean doorway. On one side of it is a high garden wall with great circular holes in it, and over the wall peep the gables and ornamental perforated parapet of a fine mansion of Charles I.'s time. This is always a most fascinating picture; but to see it at its best is when the roses are in bloom, for above the old wall and through the rounded apertures, the queen of flowers flourishes in gay festoons as if rejoicing at its surroundings. But if one is so fortunate as to obtain admission to the gardens then may he or she rejoice also, for upon the other side of that grey old wall are the prettiest of gardens and the grandest trees, one of which, an ancient yew, is no less than twenty-two feet in girth. There are terraces, stone summer-houses, and nooks and corners such as one only sees in the grounds of our ancestral homes. Within, the mansion has been much restored and somewhat modernised, but the great hall and other rooms take one back to the time of Inigo Jones, who designed the entrance gateway. In the churchyard close by is buried the most popular local man of his time, Robert Dover. If he lived in our day he surely would be the president of the "Anti-Puritanical League," for he it was who made a successful crusade against the spirit of religious austerity, the tendency of which was to put down holidays of sport and merrymaking. As

a result of his efforts, the hills above Chipping Camden were annually at Whitsuntide the scene of a revival of the mediæval days of festivity and manly exercise. Upon these occasions the originator acted as master of the ceremonies, and was duly respected, for he always wore a suit of King James' own clothes. Dover died at the beginning of the Civil War, so, fortunately for him, he did not live through the rigid rule of Cromwell. The Cotswold games, however, were revived at the Restoration. To this public benefactor (the shadow of whose cloak has surely fallen on the shoulders of Lord Avebury) Drayton wrote in eulogy:

> "We'll have thy statue in some rock cut out
> With brave inscriptions garnishèd about,
> And under written, 'Lo! this is the man
> Dover, that first these noble sports began.'
> Lads of the hills and lasses of the vale
> In many a song and many a merry tale
> Shall mention thee; and having leave to play,
> Unto thy name shall make a holiday."

Yet nobody did set up his statue, as should have been done on "Dover Hill" by Chipping Camden.

Some odd cures for certain ailments are prescribed in remote parts of the Cotswolds. Garden snails, for instance, which in Wiltshire are sold for ordinary consumption, namely, food, as "wall

fruit," are used here externally as a remedy for ague: and roasted mouse is a specific for the whooping-cough. But for the latter complaint as efficacious a result may be obtained by the pleasanter mode of riding on a donkey's back nine times round a finger-post. This remedy, however, properly belongs to Worcestershire.

If we continue in a south-westerly direction we shall pass historic Sudeley, near Winchcombe, Postlip Hall, and Southam House. Sudeley Castle must have been magnificent before it was dismantled in the Civil War. Bravely it stood two sieges, but at length capitulated; and being left a ruin by Cromwell's soldiers, the magnificent fifteenth-century mansion was left for close upon two centuries to act as a quarry for the neighbourhood. Under such disadvantages was its restoration commenced, and it is wonderful what has been done; yet there has been a certain admixture of Edwardian and Elizabethan portions which is somewhat confusing. The banqueting-room, with its noble oriel windows (originally glazed with beryl), the keep with its dungeons, and the kitchen with its huge fireplace four yards across, speak of days of lordly greatness, and the names of many weighty nobles as well as kings and queens are closely associated with the castle. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was once possessed of it; the youngest son of Owen

Tudor and Henry v.'s widow lived there; so did Sir Thomas Seymour, Edward vi.'s uncle, who married and buried there Henry viii.'s last queen, at which ceremony Lady Jane Grey was chief mourner. Elizabeth was here upon one of her progresses, and Charles i. was the last sovereign who slept there. The restored rooms are full of historical furniture, pictures, and relics. Here may be seen Amy Robsart's bed, or one of them, from Cumnor Hall: and the bed upon which the martyr king slept, not here but at Kineton, before Edgehill. There are numerous relics of the queen, who had the tact to outlive her august spouse, and the foolishness to marry a fourth husband. Catherine Parr's various books and literary compositions may here be studied, including the letter in which she accepted Seymour's offer of marriage. He was by no means the best of husbands, but a vast improvement on the royal tyrant who had coldly planned the queen's destruction; but owing to her ready wit his wrath was turned upon Wriothesley, who was to have arrested her; for when he came to perform that office, Henry called him an "an errant knave and a beast." There are lockets containing locks of her auburn hair, and portions of the dress she wore. But the main interest is centred in the chapel where the queen was buried. This building was dismantled with the rest in 1649,

and the fine Chandos monuments destroyed. Catherine's tomb, which was within the altar rails, probably shared the fate of the rest, and its position was soon forgotten. However, after the lapse of nearly a century and a half, a plain slab of alabaster in the north wall, doubtless part of the original monument, led to the discovery of a leaden case in the shape of a human form lying immediately below, only a foot or so beneath the surface of the ground. Upon the breast was the following inscription:

K. P.
Here lyethe QUENE
KATERYN wife to KYNG
HENRY THE VIII., and
Last the wife of Thomas
Lord of Sudeley, highe
Admiyrall of England
And vncle to Kyng
Edward the VI.
dyed
5 September
MCCCCC
XLVIII.

The cerecloth, hard with wax and gums, was removed from a portion of the arm, which was discovered after close upon three centuries to be still white and soft. According to another account, when the covering of the face was removed, not only the features, but the eyes were in perfect preservation. The body was reinterred, but-

treated with no decent respect, for the spot was occupied as an enclosure for rabbits; and upon one occasion it was dug up by some drunken men, who by local tradition, as a reward for their desecration, all came to an untimely end. The alabaster block may still be seen in the north wall of the chapel, but the body now lies beneath a recumbent figure in white marble which has been placed to the queen's memory.

Postlip Hall stands high in a picturesque spot not far from the main road to Cheltenham. It is a many-gabled Elizabethan house, preserving its original character, but spoiled by the insertion of plate-glass windows. Within there is one particularly fine room of elaborate oak carvings (and the arms of the Broadways who built the house) of sufficient importance to form the subject of one of the plates in Nash's *Mansions*. The house has or had the reputation of being haunted; but that was long ago in the days when it stood neglected and uninhabited.

Southam House, or Southam-de-la-Bere, to the south-west (also depicted in Nash), is a curious early-Tudor building of timber and stone, and has the advantage over Sudeley, as it was not of sufficient military importance to be roughly handled by the Parliamentarian soldiers. The ancient painted glass in the windows and an elaborate chimney-piece bearing shields of arms

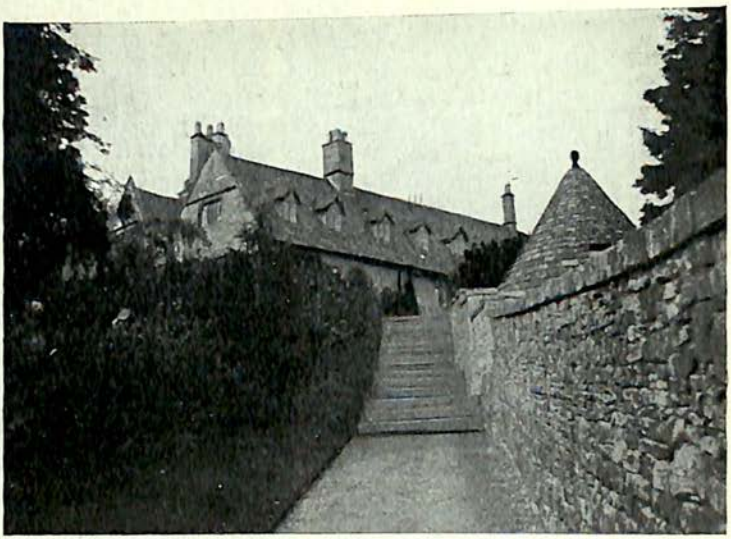
came from Hayles Abbey. The ceilings are oak panelled, and the arms of Henry VII. occur in numerous places. The situation of the house is fine, and the view over the vast stretch of country towards Worcestershire and Herefordshire magnificent. The builder of the mansion was Sir John Huddleston, whose wife was the queen Jane Seymour's aunt. The de-la-Beres, to whom the estate passed by marriage, were closely allied with the Plantagenet kings, two sisters marrying Thomas Plantagenet, Edward III.'s son, and Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Lancaster.

Avoiding Cheltenham, we will pick up the road to Stroud at Birdlip, a favourite meeting-place of the hounds on account of the surrounding woods. Coming from the south there is a gradual climb through those delightful woods until you burst upon a gorgeous view, with the ancient "Ermine Street" running, like a white wand lying upon the level pattern work of meadowland, to Gloucester, and the hills of Malvern away in the distance. Whether it was the great dark mass of hill in the foreground contrasted against the level stretch of country, or whether it was the stormy sky when we visited Birdlip on a late autumnal day, that gave the scene such a wild, romantic look, it would be difficult to say, but we remember no view with such breadth of contrast of light and shade,

or one so fitted to lead the imagination into the mystic realms of fairyland.

Up in these heights, and in so secluded a spot, it came as a surprise to find a museum. This we believe long since has been dispersed by the hammer, but we remember some really interesting things. The lady curator, the proprietress of the "Black Horse," had been given many of the exhibits by the neighbouring gentry, and was not a little proud of her collection. Valuable coins, flint weapons, fossils, pictures, and the usual medley. There was one little oil painting on a panel, the head of a beautiful girl with high powdered hair of the Georgian period, which had all the vigour of a Romney, and undoubtedly was by a master craftsman. Two curiosities we remember in particular: a pair of leggings said to have been worn by the great Duke of Marlborough, and the wooden finger-stocks from a village dame-school. It would be interesting to know where these curiosities are now. The only other finger-stocks we know of are in Ashby-de-la-Zouch church, Leicestershire.

Painswick, to the south-west, is a sleepy old town with a fine Perpendicular church much restored internally, but containing some handsome monuments. The churchyard is noted for its formal array of clipped yew trees, probably unique. They have the same peculiarity as Stonehenge,



POSTLIP HALL.

STOCKS, PAINSWICK.

for it is said nobody can count them twice the same. As, however, we did not visit the adjacent inn, we managed to accomplish the task. Close to the church wall are the stocks—iron ones.

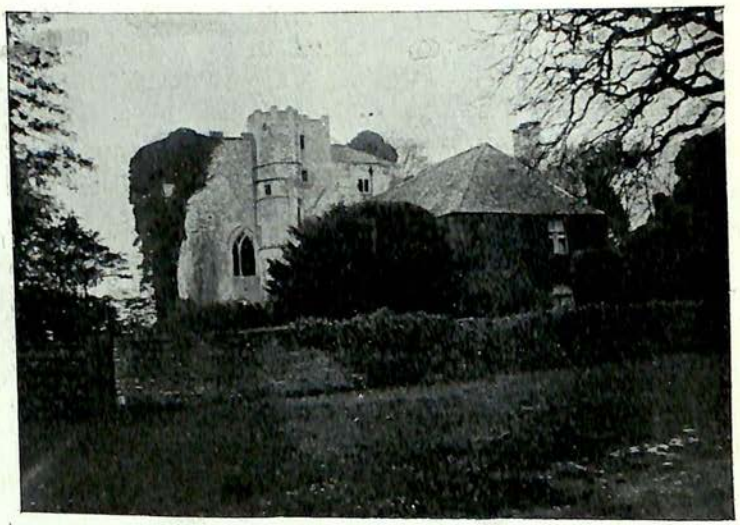
Upon the way to Stroud many weird old buildings are passed which once were, and some are still, cloth mills; but some are deserted and dilapidated, and have a sad look, as if remembering more prosperous days; and when the leaves are fast falling in the famous golden valley they look indeed forlorn. One would think there can be little poetry about an old cloth mill, but ere one gives an opinion one must visit the golden valley in the autumn. Around Nailsworth, Rodborough, and Woodchester there are many ancient houses which have degenerated into poor tenements. Such a one at Nailsworth has the brief address "No. 5 Egypt," which by all appearance was an important house in its day. A gentleman who resided in a more squalid part related how he had discovered a cavalier's rapier up in the roof of a mansion, but in a weak moment had parted with it for half a crown. "Southfield" at Woodchester is perhaps the most picturesque of these stately houses, a house which near London would fetch a formidable rent, but here a ridiculously low one. Some six miles out of Stroud a really decent house, garden, and orchard may be had for next to a song. A light railway may have now sent prices up, by

striking northwards, but not many years back we saw one very excellent little place "to let," the rent of which was only sixpence a week, and the tenant had given notice because the landlord had been so grasping as to raise it to sixpence halfpenny!

Between Nailsworth and Tetbury are Beverstone Castle and the secluded manor-house Chavenage within a mile of it. The castle stands near the road, an ivy-covered ruin of the time of Edward III., but with portions dating from the Conquest. Incorporated are some Tudor remains and some old farm buildings, forming together a pleasing picture.

To Major-General Massey, Beverstone, like Sudeley, is indebted for its battered appearance. It held out for the king, but Massey with three hundred and eighty men came and took it by storm. The general having done as much damage as possible in Gloucestershire during the Civil War, at length made some repairs by fighting on the other side at Worcester; and perhaps it was as well, for had he been on the victorious side he might have treated "the faithful city" with as little respect as Beverstone. In the peaceful days of the Restoration, which Massey lived to see, as there were no more castles to blow up he dabbled in the pyrotechnic art, suggestive of the pathetic passage in *Patience*—

NAILSWORTH



BEVERSTONE CASTLE.

Yearning for whirlwinds, and having to do the best you can with the bellows.

The regicide squire of Chavenage must also have been skilled in the noble art, for by common report at his death a few months after that of the martyr king, he vanished in flames of fire! But there was a ceremonious preliminary before this simple and effective mode of cremation. A sable coach driven by a headless coachman with a star upon his breast arrived at the dead man's door, and the shrouded form of the regicide was seen to glide into it. But bad as Nathaniel Stephens may have been, it is scarcely just that all future lords of Chavenage must make their exit in this manner.

The old house is unpretentious in appearance. Built in the form of the letter E, it has tall latticed windows lighting a great hall (famous once for its collection of armour), and a plain wing on either side, with narrow Elizabethan Gothic-headed windows. There is a ghostly look about it. It stands back from the road, but sufficiently near that one may see the entrance porch (bearing the date 1579) and the ruts of the carriage wheels upon the trim carriage drive. Arguments as strong as any in *Ingoldsby* to prove the mystic story must be true.

NOOKS IN NORTHERN WILTSHIRE

AFTER a sojourn in north-west Wilts it is refreshing to dip into the wooded lanes of the Home Counties and see again the red-brick cottages and homesteads which have such a snug and homely look after the cold grey stone and glaring chalk roads. For old-world villages and manor-houses, however, one could not choose a better exploring ground, but not, please note, for the craze of picking up bits of old oak, judging by what we overheard the very first day we stopped in one of the most out-of-the-way places of all.

"Anything old inside?" asked somebody at the doorway, having led gently and gracefully up to it so as not to arouse suspicion. "Nothing," was the reply. "May I look round inside?" was asked. "No." Then after a pause. "Any other of the cottagers got any old chairs, or china?" "One or two of them *had* some, but they sold what they had to Mrs. —— of ——.

"*Of* course," was the disgusted reply; "she's *always* first, and gets everything!"

The conversation gives but an idea of the systematic way that a crusade for the antique is carried on. If the hunter makes a "find," and the owner will not part, that unfortunate cottager is persecuted until he or she does part, sooner or later to regret the folly. And, alas! churches are not even sacred from these sharks. How often have we not seen some curious piece of furniture mentioned as being in the church, and, lo! it has vanished—where? And do not the empty brackets over many an ancient tomb tell a tale? What have become of the helmets of the ancient lords of the manors? We can quote an instance offhand. In the fine old church of Bromham, three of the helmets of the manorial lords, the Bayntons, are still there, two of them perhaps only funereal helmets, and not the actual casques of warfare; but there are three if not four vacant brackets which perchance once supported the envied headpieces with pointed visor of the fifteenth century. Aloft also are some rusty gauntlets, and one of the helmets still bears the crest of the eagle's head. The manor descended from the Beauchamps to the Bayntons, the last of whom was the nineteenth in descent from Sir Henry Baynton, Knight Marshal of the household to Henry the Second. His mother was the

eldest daughter and co-heiress of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and Miss Malet the runaway heiress. A recumbent effigy of Sir Roger Touchet in alabaster (resembling in a remarkable degree the late Sir Henry Irving as Richard III.) is covered with the carved initials of vandal visitors, not, we may add, only of our own and fathers' and grandfathers' time, but dating back from the reign of Elizabeth; so it is comforting to see that our ancestors were as prone to disfigure monuments in this way as is the modern 'Arry. One of the initials, I. W., perhaps may be that of the witty and wicked Earl of Rochester, who by repute made Spye an occasional residence, although the Bayntons certainly held the estate some years after the Lady Anne, his daughter's death in 1703. The ceiling of the Baynton chapel is richly carved, and the bosses and brackets show their original faded colouring of blue and gold. There are also coloured niches for saints; and on a canopied tomb of Elizabeth Touchet, a brass of a kneeling figure, and a tablet of the coat of arms is enamelled in colours. There also is a fine brass of John Baynton in Gothic armour.

All that remains of the old Jacobean house of Spye is a subterranean passage beneath the terrace; but the Tudor entrance gate to the picturesque park stands on the left-hand side

GATE-HOUSE, SPYE PARK.

LACOCK.

of the road to Lacock just before the road begins its winding precipitous descent. Evelyn saw the house soon after it was built, and likened it to a long barn. The view is superb, but, strangely enough, not a single window looked out upon the prospect! After dining and a game of bowls with Sir Edward Baynton, the Diarist took coach; but, says Evelyn, "in the meantime our coachmen were made so exceeding drunk, that in returning home we escaped great dangers. This, it seems, was by order of the knight, that all gentlemen's servants be so treated; but the custom is barbarous and much unbecoming a knight, still less a Christian."

A mile or so to the east of the entrance gate of Spye is Sandy Lane, a tiny hamlet with trim thatched cottages and a sturdy seventeenth-century hostelry, the "George," looking down the street; and farther along in the direction of Devizes stands the "Bell," another ancient road-side inn, which, judging from its mullioned windows, knobbed gables, and rustic porch, must date back to the days of the first Charles.

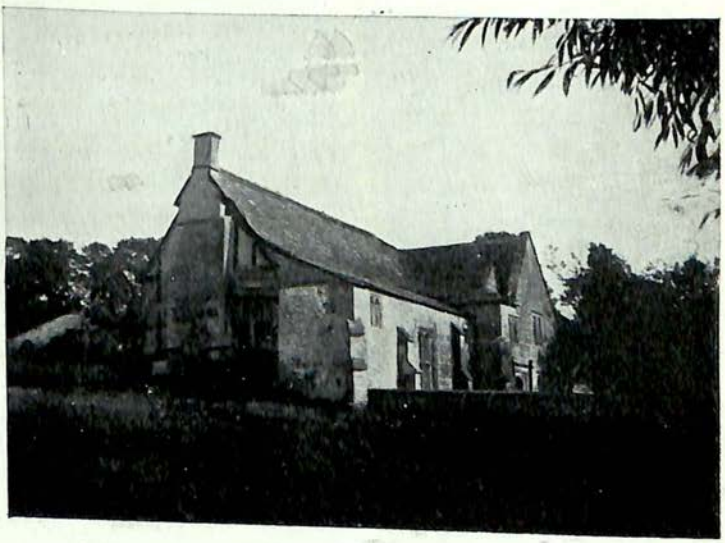
In Bromham village also there are some pretty half-timber buildings, not forgetting the "lock-up" by the churchyard. The exterior of the church is richly sculptured; a fine example of the purest Gothic.

Sleepy old Lacock, with its numerous over-hanging gables, is a typical unspoiled village. It

was once upon a time a town, but by all appearances it never can have been a flourishing one; and let us hope it will remain in its dormant state now that there is nothing out of harmony, for the Lacock of to-day must look very much as it did two hundred years or more ago. It consists mainly of two wide streets, with a fine old church at the end of one and a lofty seventeenth-century inn at the other. Opposite the latter is a monastic barn with blocked-up arched doorway, and facing it a fine row of timbered houses. Wherever you go the pervading tone is grey, and one misses the little front gardens with bright flowers and creepers. By the school stands the village cross. Farther along a great wide porch projects into the street, and over it a charming traceried wooden window. Nearer the church the road narrows, and a group of timber cottages make a pleasing picture, one of them with a wide entrance of carved oak spandrels above an earlier stone doorway. The church, a noble edifice, has a very graceful spire and some good tombs, including two wooden mural monuments to Edward Baynard who lived in Elizabeth's reign, and to Lady Ursula Baynard in the reign of Charles I.

The monument of Sir John Talbot of Lacock describes him as born of the most noble family of the Duke of Shrewsbury, which is somewhat

LACOCK.



BEWLEY COURT.

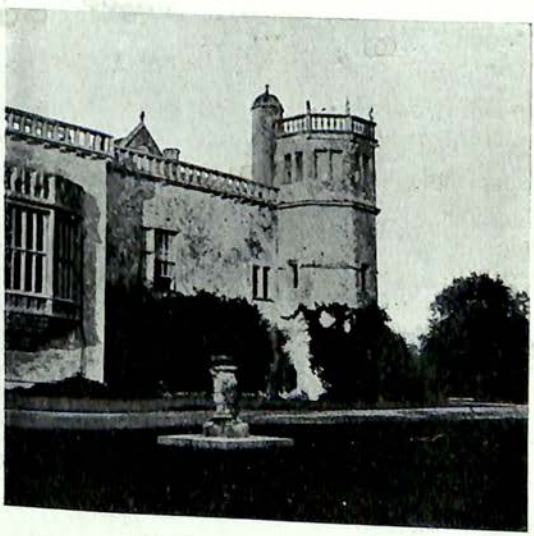
confusing. Sir John was descended from John, second Earl of Shrewsbury, who died in 1460, and his monument was erected when the twelfth earl and first duke was living. Sir John died in 1713, and his son and heir predeceased him, as mentioned on the monument.

But the principal object of interest at Lacock, of course, is its famous abbey, the early fifteenth-century cloisters being, it is said, the most perfect example in England. It has been a residence since the Dissolution, when the estate was granted by Henry VIII. to Sir William Sherrington, the daughter of whose brother Sir Henry married a Talbot of Salwarpe, the ancestor of the present owner, C. H. Talbot, Esq., a learned antiquary, by whose care and skill so many points of interest have been brought to light. The cloisters, refectory, chapter-house, sacristy, etc., are in an excellent state of preservation, and there are some fine hooded fireplaces, and among the curiosities, a great stone tank in which fish were kept; and the nuns' cauldron, something after the style of Guy of Warwick's porridge-pot. The groined roof of the cloister is remarkable, the bosses showing their original colouring, nearly two hundred or more all being of different design. The sides facing the road are flanked by an octagonal tower of singular beauty, ornamented with balustrades, and a staircase turret crowned

with a cupola. This contains the muniment-room, in which is preserved Henry III.'s Magna Charta, which belonged to the foundress, Ela, Countess of Shrewsbury, the widow of William Longespee, the son of Henry II. and Fair Rosamond. Dugdale tells us that the site "Snaile's Mede" was pointed out to this good lady in a vision. An epitaph to the abbess Ela may still be seen within the cloisters.

Sir John Talbot of Lacock was a staunch Royalist, and the first person who received the Merry Monarch in his arms at Dover upon his landing in 1660. Both Sir John and his son Sharington Talbot figure as duellists in the diaries of Pepys and Evelyn. The former was one of the six combatants in that famous encounter at Barn Elms, where Buckingham mortally wounded Francis Talbot, the eleventh Earl of Shrewsbury. Sir John proved a better swordsman than his antagonist Captain William Jenkins, for the latter was left dead upon the field. The Royal pardon from Charles II. is still preserved in Lacock Abbey. The duel between the younger Talbot and Captain Love at Glastonbury, in July 1685, is mentioned by Evelyn. Both commanded a company of militia against Monmouth at Sedgemoor, and after the battle an argument arose as to which fought the best. The discussion grew heated, swords were drawn,

LACOCK.



LACOCK ABBEY.

and Talbot was killed. He was the eldest and only surviving son of the knight, and had he left issue, upon the death of the eleventh Earl of Shrewsbury's son, the first and only duke, the Lacock Talbots would by priority have become Earls of Shrewsbury.

Beyond the village, just before the road winds upwards towards Spye Park, is Bewley Court, an interesting old farm, with trefoil windows and Gothic entrance door of fine proportions. Its hall is intact, having its wide open fireplace and open timber roof with carved beams. A reed-grown canal, with one of those queer hand drawbridges, serves as the moat of yore. Bewley by some is corrupted into "Brewery," for close by there is such an establishment, and the ancient name has become submerged. There are said to have been four Courts originally belonging to Lacock Abbey, but this is the only remaining one.

Each approach to Lacock is picturesque, but the most pleasing is from the lane which runs up to Gastard and Corsham. This joins the Melksham road by a charming old gabled and timbered cottage, not architecturally remarkable, but pleasing in outline and colour. From the lane above, this roadside cottage stands out against a background of wooded hill, and when the sun is low it presents a picture which must have tempted many an artist. On the way

to Gastard and thence to Neston there are many tumble-down old places which seem to be entirely out of touch with the twentieth century. But at the highest point there is a startling notice which might alarm a motorist should he lose his way up in these narrow lanes. "Beware of the trams" is posted up in big letters! You look around in astonishment, for silence reigns supreme; but by and bye you come upon a stone quarry near the dilapidated entrance to what was once probably a manor house, and a light falls upon the meaning of the "trams." An artistic projecting signboard not far off bears the inscription:

"Arise, get up the Season now
Drive up Brave Boys
God speed the Plough."

Up a narrow lane is a tiny chapel with a stone mullioned window cut down into a semicircle at the top. A little stone sundial over the entrance door, and the smallest burial-ground we have ever seen, are worth notice for their quaintness. Farther to the west is Wormwood Farm, whose ivy-clad gables give the house a more homely look than most hereabouts. Higher up in a very bleak position is Chapel Plaster Hermitage, an older building, whose little belfry surely cannot summon many worshippers. It was a halting-place of pilgrims to Glastonbury, and in Georgian days of

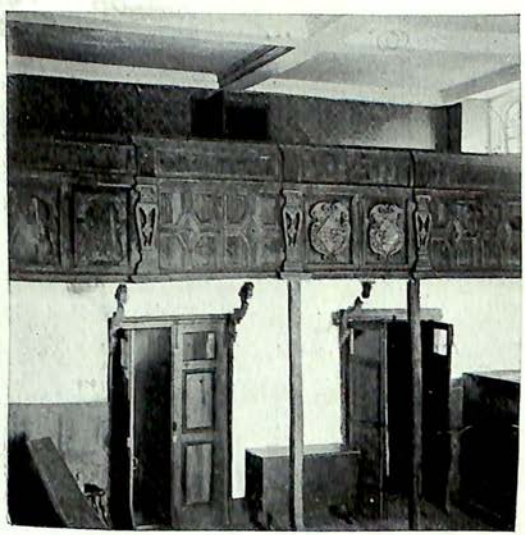
lonely travellers, who were eased of their purses by a gentleman of the road named Baxter, who afterwards was hung up as a warning on Claverton Down. Near the wood, the resort of this highwayman, is Hazelbury House, a sixteenth-century mansion, much reduced in size, whose formidable battlemented garden walls are worthy of a fortress. It was once a seat of the Strodes, whose arms are displayed on the lofty piers of the entrance gate. On the other side of the Great Bath road is Cheney Court, another gabled mansion which has been of importance in its day, and within half a mile, Coles Farm, a smaller building, alas! fast falling to decay. Its windows are broken and its panelled rooms are open to the weather. We ploughed our way through garden, or what was once a garden, waist-high with weeds, to a Tudor doorway whose door presumably was more accustomed to be opened than closed. At the foot of the staircase was a little wicket gate leading to the capacious cellars. Somebody had scrawled above an ancient fireplace close by, a plea against wanton mischief; but that was the only sign that anybody was interested in the place. But we learned something from an intelligent farmer who was picking apples in one of the surrounding orchards. It was very sad, he said, but so it had remained for years. The owner was abroad, and though various people had tried to buy it, there were legal diffi-

culties which prevented it. "But why not find a tenant?" we asked. "That would surely be better than allowing it to fall to pieces!" He shook his head. "'Tis too far gone," he said, "and there's no money to put it in repair." So Coles Farm, situated in the midst of lovely hills and orchards, gives the cold shoulder to many a willing tenant.

It is a precipitous climb from here to Colerne, which across the valley looks old and inviting from the Bath road. But the place is sadly disappointing, and Hunters' Hall, which once upon a time was used as an inn and possessed some remarkably fine oak carvings, is now a shell, and scarcely worth notice.

The village of Corsham, approached either from the north or south, is equally picturesque. By the former there is a long row of sturdy Tudor cottages with mullioned windows and deep-set doorways; by the latter, the grey gables of the ancient Hungerford Hospital, and beyond the huge piers of the entrance to Corsham Court. An inscription over the almshouse porch and beneath the elaborate sculptured arms of the Hungerfords, says that it was founded by Lady Margaret Hungerford, daughter of William Halliday, alderman of London, and Susan, daughter of Sir Henry Row, Knight, Lord Mayor of London. The chapel is on the right-hand side, and contains the original

CORSHAM ALMSHOUSE.



CORSHAM ALMSHOUSE.

Jacobean pulpit, seats, and gallery. The pulpit is a two-decker, and the seat beneath a comfortable armchair of large proportions with an ingenious folding footstool. The screen is a fine piece of Jacobean carving, with pilasters and semicircular arches of graceful design, with the Hungerford arms upon two shields. There is a good oak staircase and a quaint exterior corridor leading to the several dwellings, with trim little square gardens allotted to each. Corsham Court has a stately and dignified appearance. The second entrance gate has colossal piers, which quite dwarf the others previously mentioned. Beyond are the stables, a picturesque row of Elizabethan gables and pinnacles. The south front of the house preserves its original character in the form of the letter E with the arms and the crest of the builder, William Halliday, on pinnacles over the gables, and seven bay-windows. The interior of the mansion has been much modernised, but the picture collection contains some of the choicest old masters. Some of Lord Methuen's ancestors by Reynolds and Gainsborough are wonderfully vigorous. Here is Vandyck's Charles I. on horseback, with which one is so familiar. How many replicas must there be of this famous picture! Charles II. hangs opposite his favourite son in one of the corridors—a fine portrait of the handsome Monmouth. One of the most curious pictures is a group by Sir

Peter Lely, representing himself in mediæval costume playing the violoncello to his own family in light and airy dress. One would have thought that he would have clad his wife and daughters more fully than some of his famous beauties: on the contrary. The church, whose tower is detached, has been restored from time to time, and looks by no means lacking in funds. The carved parclose of stone and two altar-tombs to the Hanhams are the chief points of interest. There is a simple recumbent effigy of one of the Methuens, a little girl, which in its natural sleeping pose is strangely pathetic, even to those who know nothing of the story of her early death.

Biddestone, above Corsham, has many good old houses round its village green. The little bell turret to the church is singular, but the eye is detracted by an ugly stove-pipe which sticks out of the roof close by. There is some Roman work within, but the high box pews look out of keeping. About three miles to the north-west is Castle Combe, one of the sweetest villages in Wiltshire or in any other county. It is surrounded by hills and hanging woods, and lies deep down and hidden from view. As you descend, the banks on either side show glimpses, here and there; a grey gable peeping out of the dense foliage or grey cottages perched up high. Still downward, the road winds in the shade of lofty trees, then

CORSHAM ALMSHOUSE.

CASTLE COMBE.

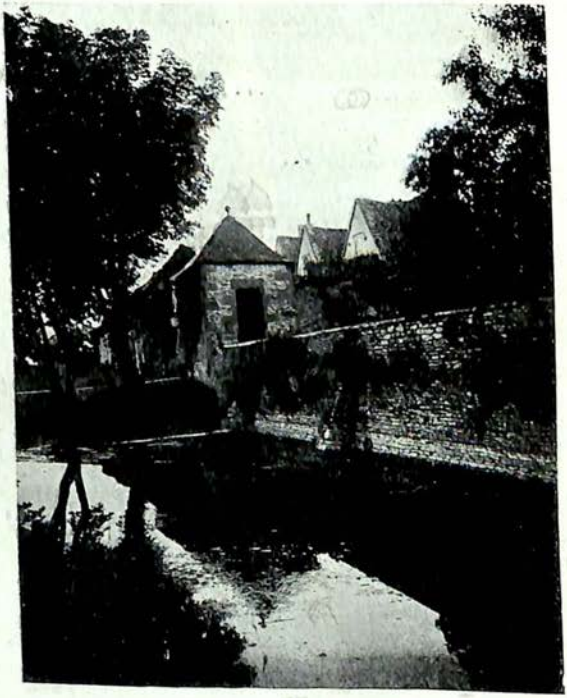
suddenly you find yourself looking down upon the quaint old market-cross, with the grey church tower peering over some ancient roofs. This presumably is the market-place,—not a busy one by any means, for beyond an aged inhabitant resting on the solid stone base, or perhaps a child or two climbing up and down the steps (for it is a splendid playground)—all is still. The village pump alongside the cross, truly, supplies occasional buckets of water for the various gabled stone cottages around, indeed (as is invariably the case when one's camera is in position) people seemed to spring up from nowhere, and the pump handle was exceptionally busy. The cross is richly sculptured with shields and roses at the base, and the shaft rises high above the picturesque old roof, which is supported by four moulded stone supports. Undoubtedly it is one of the most perfect fifteenth-century crosses in England. The road still winds downwards to a rushing stream crossed by a little bridge, and here there is a group of pretty cottages with prettier gardens abutting on the road. We have seen these under very different aspects, in March with snow upon the creepers, and in October when the creepers were brilliant scarlet, and scarcely know which made the prettier picture. The sound of rushing water adds romance to this sweet village.

The ancient family of Scrope has been seated

here for over five centuries and a half. The "Castle Inn" by the market-cross remains primitive in its arrangements, although the "tripping" season makes great demands upon its supplies. Though ordinarily quiet enough, occasionally there is a swarm, and a sudden demand of a hundred or so "teas" is enough to try the resources of any hostess. But it was too much for the poor lady here; her health was bad, and she would have to flee before another season came round. Strange to say, it is the slackness of business that usually sends folks away. The graceful fifteenth-century pinnacled and embattled tower of the church gives the ancient building a grand appearance. The church is rich in stained glass, containing the arms of the various lords of the manor.

Yatton Keynell, a couple of miles eastwards, possesses a fine Jacobean manor-house, with a curious porch and very uncommon mullioned window. The wing to the right was demolished not many years ago, so that now a front of three gables is all that remains; and though it looks fairly capacious, there are but few rooms, the space being taken up with staircase (a fine one) and attics. The exterior of the church is good, but the interior is "as new as ninepence," saving a fine fifteenth-century stone rood-screen. The spiral staircase up to the summit has been cut through, which is a pity, as otherwise the organ

YATTON KEYNELL MANOR.



BULLICH MANOR-HOUSE.

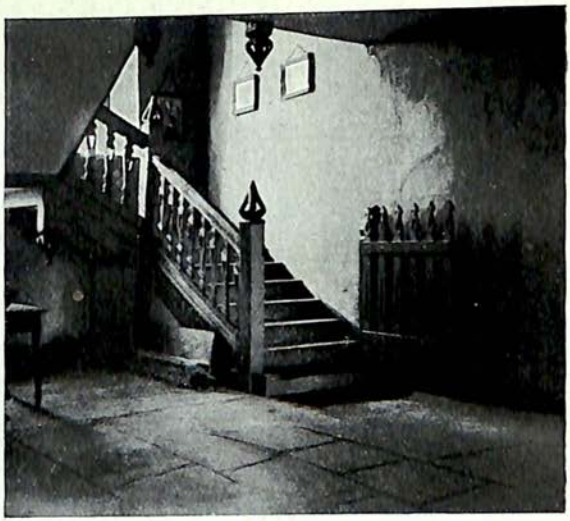
would have been less conspicuous. The steps of the village cross now serve as a basement for the village inn.

The churches of Stanton St. Quinton and Kingston St. Michael have suffered internally as much as that of Yatton Keynell, and, alas! the fourteenth-century manor-house of the St. Quintons is now no more. An aged person working in the churchyard, though very proud that he had helped to pull it down, insisted on pointing out the "ould dov-cart." This may be pure "Wilshire," but until we saw the dove-cot we did not grasp the meaning. Nearer Chippenham is Bullich House, which fortunately has been left in peace. Beside the entrance gate two queer little "gazebos" were covered with Virginia creeper in its bright autumn tints. The remains of the clear moat washed the garden wall, over which peeped the gables of the house with the waning red sunlight reflected in the casements—this was a picture to linger in one's memory; and there is no telling how far one's fancy might not have been led by speculating upon the meaning of two grim heads which form pinnacles above the porch, had the stillness not been broken by the harsh sounds of the gramophone issuing from a neighbouring cottage! If Bullich possesses a ghost, as it ought to, judging by appearances, surely an up-to-date

music-hall ditty should "lay" him in the moat in desperation.

About a mile away on the western side of the main road from Chippenham to Yatton Keynell is Sheldon Manor, a charming old residence with a great Gothic porch like a church, and a Gothic window over it belonging to what is called the "Priest's chamber." Upon the gable end, over it, is one of those queer little box sundials one occasionally sees in Wiltshire. As you enter the porch the massive staircase faces you, with its picturesque newels and pendants, and the little carved oak gate, which was there to keep the dogs downstairs. In the wall to the right, just beyond the entrance door, is a curious stone trough of fair capacity. It is screened by a door, and exteriorly looks like a cupboard; but what was the use of this trough we are at a loss to conjecture, unless in old days the horses were admitted.

But two of the finest old houses in the county are certainly South Wraxall and Great Chaldfield, situated within a couple of miles from one another to the west of Melksham. The former has recently been converted from a farmhouse again into a mansion, and the latter is now undergoing careful restoration. Though the exterior of Great Chaldfield is unimpaired, and as perfect a specimen of an early fifteenth-century house as one could wish to see, sad havoc has been



SHELDON MANOR.

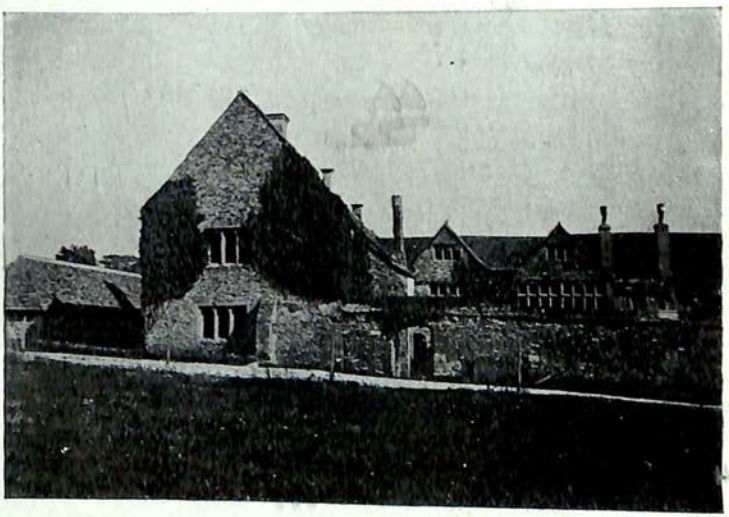
SHELDON MANOR.

played inside. The great hall many years ago was so divided up that it was difficult to guess at its original proportions. The finest Gothic windows with groined roofs, ornamental bosses, and fireplaces, and carved oak beams, have long since been blocked up and their places filled with mean ones of the Georgian period or later. To fully comprehend the wholesale obliteration of the original work, one has only to see the thousand bits of sculptured masonry laid out upon the lawn of the back garden. To place the pieces of the puzzle correctly together must be a task to try the knowledge and patience of the most expert in such matters, but piece by piece each is going into its proper place. The huge stone heads with scooped-out eyes, through which the ancient lord of the manor could watch what was going on below in the hall without being observed, once again will be reinstated. There are three of them, and the hollowed eyes have sharp edges, as if they were cut out only yesterday. Then there is an ungainly grinning figure of the fifteenth century, locally known as "Blue Beard," who within living memory has sat on the lawn in front of the mansion; but his proper place is up aloft on top of one of the gable ends, and there, of course, he will go, and, like Sister Ann, be able to survey the road to Broughton Gifford to see whether any-

body is coming. Among the rooms now under course of repair is "Blue Beard's chamber," and naturally enough the neighbouring children of the past generation (we do not speak of the present, for doubtless up-to-date education has made them far too knowing to treat such things seriously—the more's the pity) used to hold the house in holy dread. But there certainly is a creepy look about it, especially towards dusk, when the light of the western sky shines through the shell of a beautiful oriel window, and makes the monsters on the gable ends stand out while the front courtyard is wrapt in shade. The reed-grown moat gives the house a neglected and sombre look. The group of buildings, with curious little church with its crocketed bell turret on one side and a great barn on the other, is altogether remarkable. How it got the name of "Blue Beard's Castle" we could not learn. Recently a "priest's hole" has been discovered up against the ceiling in a corner of his chamber; but whether he concealed himself here or some of his wives we cannot say.

At the back of the manor there used to be a tumbledown old mill, which unfortunately is now no more. The little church contains a good stone screen (which has been removed from its original position), and some stained glass in the windows. The pulpit, a canopied two-decker, and the capa-

SOUTH WRAXALL MANOR-HOUSE.



SOUTH WRAXALL.

cious high-backed pews (half a dozen at the most) have the appearance of a pocket place of worship. But Great Chaldfield is a parish by itself without a village; the congregation also is a pocket one.

As before stated, South Wraxall manor-house is restored to all its ancient dignity; but somehow or other, though much care and money have been bestowed upon it, it seems to have lost half of its poetry, for the walls and gardens are now so trim and orderly, that it is almost difficult to recognise it as the same when the gardens were weed-grown and the walls toned with lichen and moss. Moreover, the road has been diverted, so that now the fine old gatehouse stands not against the highway, but well within the boundary walls. Inside are some remarkably fine old rooms with linen panelling. The drawing-room has a superb stone sculptured mantelpiece, upon which are represented Prudentia, Arithmetica, Geometrica, and Justicia, and Pan occupies the middle pedestal supporting the frieze, while four larger figures support the mantel. The ceiling is coved, and ornamented with enormous pendants, and the cornice above the great bay mullioned-window is enriched with a curious design. A remarkable feature of the room is a three-sided projection of the wall, the upper part of which is panelled, having scooped-out niches for five seats, one in the middle and two on either side. The banqueting-

room also is a typical room of Queen Elizabeth's time, and the "Guest chamber" is one of the many rooms in England which claim the honour of inhaling the first fumes from a tobacco-pipe in England. But Raleigh's pipe here is said to have been of solid silver; moreover, tradition does not state that it was so rudely extinguished as elsewhere, with a bucket of water: so, at any rate, here the story is more dignified. To settle definitely where Sir Walter smoked his first pipe would be as difficult a problem as to decide which was the mansion where the bride hid herself in the oak chest, or which was King John's favourite hunting lodge.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN SOMERSET

SOMERSETSHIRE abounds in old-world villages, more particularly the eastern division, or rather the eastern side—to the east, say, of a line drawn from Bristol to Crewkerne. This line would intersect such famous historic places as Wells and Glastonbury, but in our limited space we must confine our attention more particularly to more remote spots. One of these, for example, is the village of Norton St. Philip, midway between Bath and Frome, which possesses one of the oldest and most picturesque inns in England. This wonderful timber building of projecting storeys dates mainly from the fifteenth century, although it has been a licensed house since 1397, and upon its solid basement of stone the "George" looks good for many centuries to come. It was formerly known as the "Old House," not that the other buildings at Norton St. Philip are by any means new. It is merely, compara-

tively speaking, a matter of a couple of hundred years or so.

Many are the local stories and traditions of "Philips Norton Fight," for here it was that the Duke of Monmouth's followers had the first real experience of warfare; and the encounter with the Royalist soldiers was a sharp one while it lasted. Monmouth's intention of attacking Bristol had been abandoned, and during a halt at Norton on June 27, 1685, his little army was overtaken by the king's forces under the young Duke of Grafton, Monmouth's half-brother. The lane where fighting was briskest used to be remembered as "Monmouth Street," possibly the same steep and narrow lane now called Bloody Lane, which winds round to the back of the Manor Farm (some remains of which go back quite a century before Monmouth's time), through the courtyard of which the duke marched his regiment to attack the enemy in flank. The other end of the lane was barricaded, so Grafton was caught in a trap, and had difficulty in fighting his way through.

Both armies sought protection of the high hedges, which, take it all round, got the worst of it; but Grafton lost considerably more men than Monmouth, although a cannonade of six hours on both sides only had one victim. An old resident living fifty years ago, whose great-grand-

THE GEORGE, NORTON ST. PHILIP

THE GEORGE, NORTON ST. PHILIP.

father fought for "King Monmouth," used to relate how the duke's field pieces were planted by the "Old House," his grace's headquarters; and the tradition yet lingers in the inn that Colonel Holmes, on Monmouth's side, finished the amputation of his own arm, which was shattered with a shot, with a carving knife. Some of the ancient farmhouses between Bath and Frome preserve some story or another in connection with "Norton Fight," and George Roberts relates in his excellent Life of Monmouth that early in the nineteenth century the song was still sung:

"The Duke of Monmouth is at Norton Town
All a fighting for the Crown
Ho-boys-ho."

There are some curious old rooms in the "George"; and it is astonishing the amount of space that is occupied by the attics, the timbers of which are enormous. Up in these dimly lighted wastes, report says that a cloth fair was held three times a year; and one may see the shaft or well up which the cloth was hauled from a side entrance in the street. The fair survives in a very modified form on one of the dates, May 1st. Upon the first floor, approached by a spiral stone staircase, is "Monmouth's room," the windows of which look up the road to Trowbridge. The open Tudor fireplace, the oaken beams and uneven floor, carries

the mind back to the illustrious visitor who already was well aware that he was playing a losing game, and knew what he might expect from the unforgiving James. At the back of the old inn is the galleried yard, a very primitive one, now almost ruinous, with rooms, leading from the open corridors, tumbling to pieces, and floors unsafe to walk upon. Through the gaps may be seen the cellars below, containing three huge beer barrels, each of a thousand gallons' capacity. A fine stone fireplace in one will make a plunge below ere very long.

But Somersetshire owns another remarkable fifteenth-century hostelry, the "George" at Glastonbury, in character entirely different from that at Norton St. Philip. The panelled and traceried Gothic stonework of the front, with its graceful bay-window rising to the roof, is perhaps more beautiful but not so quaint, nor has it that rugged vastness of the other which somehow impresses us with the rough-and-tumble hospitality of the Middle Ages. "Ye old Pilgrimme Inn," as the "George" at Glastonbury once was called, was built in Edward IV.'s reign, whose arms are displayed over the entrance gateway. Here is, or was, preserved the bedstead said to have been used by Henry VIII. when he paid a visit to the famous abbey.

A mile or so before one gets to Norton, travelling up the main road from Frome, there is one

of those exasperating signposts which are occasionally planted about the country. The road divides, and the sign points directly in the middle at a house between. It says "To Bath," and that is all; and people have to ask the way to that fashionable place at the aforesaid house. The inmate wearily came to the door. How many times had he been asked the same question! He was driven to desperation, and was going to invest in some black paint and a brush for his own as well as travellers' comfort. But how much worse when there is no habitation where to make inquiries! You are often led carefully up to a desolate spot, and then abandoned in the most heartless fashion. The road forks, and either there is no signpost, or the place you are nearing is not mentioned at all. Unless your intuitive perception is beyond the ordinary, you must either toss up for it, or sit down and wait peacefully until some one may chance to pass by.

The church and manor-house of the pretty village of Wellow, above Norton to the north-west, are rich in oak carvings. The latter was one of the seats of the Hungerfords, and was built in the reign of Charles I. In the rubbish of the stable-yard, for it is now a farm, a friend of ours picked up a spur of seventeenth-century date, which probably had lain there since the Royalist soldiers were quartered upon their way to meet

the Monmouth rebels. Another seat of the Hungerfords was Charterhouse Hinton Manor, to the east of Wellow, a delightful old ivy-clad dwelling, incorporated with the remains of a thirteenth-century priory. Corsham and Heytesbury also belonged to this important family; but their residence for over three centuries was the now ruinous castle of Farleigh, midway between Hinton and Norton to the east. These formidable walls and round towers, embowered in trees and surrounded by orchards, are romantically placed above a ravine whose beauty is somewhat marred by a factory down by the river. The entrance gatehouse is fairly perfect, but the clinging ivy obliterates its architectural details and the carved escutcheon over the doorway. But were it not for this natural protection the gatehouse would probably share the fate of one of the round towers of the northern court, whose ivy being removed some sixty years ago brought it down with a run. The castle chapel is full of interest, with frescoed walls and flooring of black and white marble. The magnificent monuments of the Hungerfords duly impress one with their importance. The recumbent effigies of the knights and dames, with the numerous shields of arms and their various quarterings, are quite suggestive of a corner in Westminster Abbey, though not so dark and dismal. Here lie the bodies of Sir Thomas, Sir

CHARTERHOUSE HINTON.

WELLOW MANOR-HOUSE.

Walter, and Sir Edward Hungerford, the first of whom fought at Crecy and the last on the Parliamentary side, when his fortress was held for the king, and surrendered in September 1645. His successor and namesake did his best to squander away his fortune of thirty thousand pounds a year. His numerous mansions were sold, including the castle, and his town house pulled down and converted into the market at Charing Cross, where his bewigged bust was set up in 1682. His son Edward, who predeceased him before he came to man's estate (or what was left of his father's), married the Lady Althea Compton, who was well endowed. In the letters preserved at Belvoir we learn that the union was without her sire's consent. "She went out with M^is^ Grey," writes Lady Chaworth in one of her letters to Lord Roos, "as to a play, but went to Sir Edward Hungerford's, where a minister, a ring, and the confidents were wayting for them, and so young Hungerford maried her; after she writ to the Bishop of London to acquaint and excuse her to her father, upon which he sent a thundering command for her to come home that night which she did obey." A week later she made her escape. But the runaway couple were soon to be parted. Eight months passed, and she was dead; and the youthful widower survived only three years. Old Sir Edward lived sufficiently long to repent

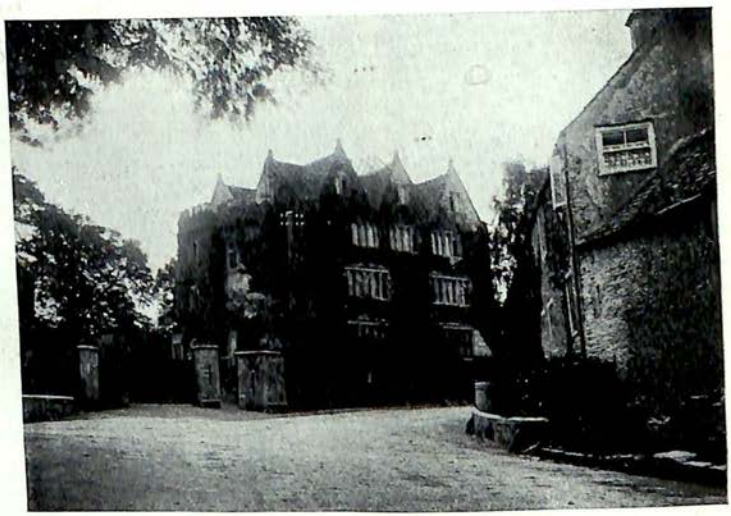
his extravagant habits, for he is said to have died in poverty at five score and fifteen!

Beckington, about four miles to the south of Farleigh, has another castle, but more a castle in name than anything else. It is a fine many-gabled house, by all appearances not older than the reign of James I. or perhaps Elizabeth. It is close against the road, and practically in the village, where are other lofty houses similar in character. There is an erroneous tradition that James II. slept here the night before the battle of Sedgemoor, regardless of the fact that his sacred Majesty was snug in London. The house was long neglected and deserted, and owing to stories of ghostly visitors and subterranean passages could not find a purchaser at £100! But this was many years ago, as will be seen from an advertisement quoted in an old number of *Notes and Queries*. Things are different now, for ghosts and subterranean passages have a marketable value.

Somersetshire abounds in superstitions as well as in old-world villages. From the southern part of the county come tales of people being bewitched, and it is a good thing for many an aged crone that their supposed offences are thought lightly of nowadays.

Some five years ago a notorious "wise man" of Somerset, known as Dr. Stacey, fell down stairs and broke his neck. The doctor's clients

OLD HOUSE NEAR CROSCOMBE.



BECKINGTON CASTLE.

doubtless had expected a more dignified ending to his career, for, judging from his powers of keeping evil or misfortune at arm's-length, it was a regular thing for people who had been "overlooked" to seek a consultation so as to get the upper hand of the evil influence. His patients were usually received at midnight, when incantations were held and mysterious powders burned. In most instances this was done where there had been continual losses in stock, or on farms where the cattle had fallen sick.

A remarkable instance of credulity only the other day came from the East End of London, which, happening in the twentieth century, is too astonishing not to be recorded here. A young Jewess sought the aid of a Russian "wise woman" to bring the husband back who had deserted her. The process was a little complicated. Eighteen pennyworth of candles stuck all round with pins were burned. Pins also had to be sewn into the lady's garments, and some "clippings" from a black cat had to be burned in the fire. The cost of these mysterious charms altogether amounted to nearly six pounds, which was expensive considering the truant husband did not return. During some recent alterations to an old house near Kilrush, Ireland, beneath the flooring was discovered a doll dressed to personify a woman against whom a former occupant owed a deadly

grudge. It was stabbed through the breast with a dagger-shaped hairpin, which presumably it was hoped would bring about a more speedy death than the slower process of melting a diminutive waxen effigy.

Cases of ague in Somerset are said to succumb if a spider is captured and starved to death! Consumptives also are said to be cured by carrying them through a flock of sheep in the morning when the animals are first let out of the fold. It is said to bode good luck if, when drinking, a fly should drop into one's cup or glass. When this happens, we have somewhere heard, that a person's nationality may be discovered; but beer must be the liquid. A Spaniard leaves his drink and is mute. A Frenchman leaves it also untouched, but uses strong language. An Englishman pours the beer away and orders another glass. A German extracts the fly with his finger and finishes his beer. A Russian drinks the beer, fly and all. And a Chinaman fishes out the fly, swallows it, and throws away the beer.

But enough of these peculiarities.

In the wooded vale between Shepton Mallet and Wells is a pretty straggling village of white-washed houses with Tudor mullioned windows and, some of them, Tudor fireplaces within. This is Croscombe, which, like Crowcombe in western Somerset, has its village cross, but a mutilated

CROSCOMBE CHURCH.

CROSCOMBE.

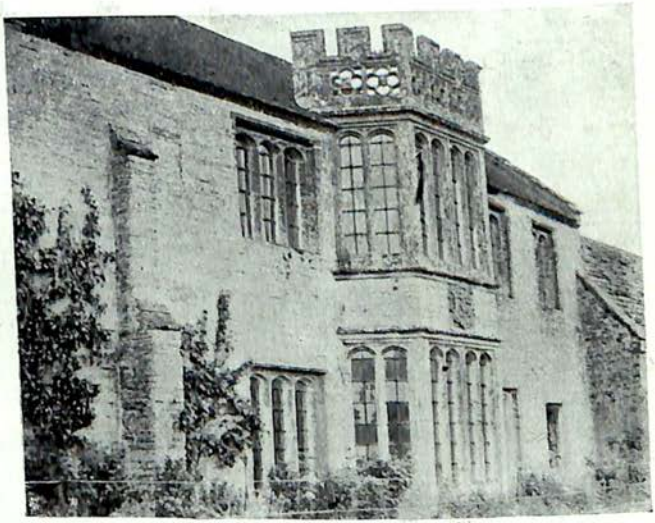
one, and a church rich in Jacobean woodwork. The canopied pulpit, dated 1616, and the chancel screen, reaching almost to the roof, bearing the Royal arms, are perhaps the finest examples of the period to be found anywhere. An inn, once a priory, near the cross has panelled ceilings and other features of the fifteenth century. Some old cloth mills, with their emerald green mill-ponds, are one of the peculiarities of Croscombe. Shepton Mallet is depressing, perhaps because crape is manufactured there. A lonely old hostelry to the south of the town known as "Cannard's Grave," not a cheery sign under the most favourable circumstances, but with padlocked doors and windows boarded up as we saw it, had a forbidding look, and seemed to warrant the mysterious stories that are told about it. The cross in the market-place was erected in 1500, but it has been too scraped and restored to classify it with those at Cheddar or Malmesbury. The church contains a fine oak roof and some ancient tombs, mainly to the Strodes, an important Somersetshire family with Republican tendencies, one of whom harboured the Duke of Monmouth in his house the night after his defeat at Sedgemoor. The remains of this house, "Downside," stand about a mile from Shepton Mallet, but it has been altered and restored from time to time, so that now it has lost much of its

ancient appearance. The pistols which the duke left here remained in the possession of descendants until about eight years ago, when they were lost. Monmouth's host, Edward Strode, also owned what is now called "Monmouth House," from the fact that the duke slept there on June 23rd and 30th, 1685, upon his march from Bridgwater towards Bristol and back again. Monmouth's room may yet be seen, and not many years ago possessed its original furniture.[1]

At Cannard's Grave we strike into the old Foss way, and if we follow it through West Lydford towards Ilchester we shall find on the left-hand side, a quarter of a mile or so from the road, Lytes Cary, one of the most compact little manor-houses in western England. But the fine old rooms are bare and almost ruinous. The arms of the Lytes occur in some shields of arms in the "decorated" chapel (which is now a cider cellar), and upon a projecting bay-window near a fine embattled and pierced parapet. The hall is entered from the entrance porch (over which is a graceful oriel), and has its timber roof and rich cornice intact. On the first floor is a spacious panelled room with Tudor bay-window (dated 1533) and open fireplace, which if carefully restored would make a delightful dwelling room; and it seems a thousand pities that this and other apartments dating from the four-

[1] See *King Monmouth.*

LYTES CARY MANOR-HOUSE



LYTES CARY MANOR-HOUSE.

teenth century should be in their present neglected state. The front of the manor-house reminds one of Great Chaldfield in Wiltshire, but on a smaller scale and exteriorly less elaborate in architectural detail.

The eastern corner of the western division of Somerset is especially rich in picturesque old villages and mansions—that is to say, the country enclosed within or just beyond the four towns Langport, Somerton, Chard, and Yeovil. Within this area, or a mile or so beyond, we have the grand seats of Montacute, Brympton D'Eversy, Hinton St. George, and Barrington Court; the smaller but equally interesting manor-houses of Sandford Orcas, South Petherton, and Tintinhull, and the quaint old villages and churches of Trent, Martock, Curry Rivel, etc.

The ancient county town of Somerton having been left severely alone by the railway, remains in a very dormant state, and, of course, is picturesque in proportion, as will be seen by its octagonal canopied market-cross and the group of buildings adjacent. Langport lies low, and is uninviting, with marshy pools around, with to the north-west Bridgwater way the villages of Chedzoy, Middlezoy, and Weston Zoyland, full of memories of the fight at Sedgemoor. The church of Curry Rivel, to the west of Langport, has many ancient carvings, and retains its beautiful oak

screen and bench-ends of the fifteenth century. Within its ancient ornamented ironwork railing is a curious Jacobean tomb, representing the recumbent effigies of two troopers, Marmaduke and Robert Jennings. It seems selfish that they should thus lie in state while their wives are kneeling below by two little cribs containing their children tucked up in orderly rows like mummified bambinoes. On the summit of a circular arch above, five painted cherubs are reclining at their ease, and chained to one of the iron railings is a little coffer which gives a touch of mystery to the whole. What does this little sealed coffer contain?—for it must have been in its present position since the monument was erected. Are the warriors' hearts therein, or the bones of the five bambinoes? There is another Jacobean tomb, just like a cumbrous cabinet of the period. It is hideous enough for anything, and obscures one of three interesting fourteenth-century mural monuments.

In the old farmhouse of Burrow, near Curry Rivel, some swords and jack-boots of the time of Charles II. were preserved. They are now in the museum at Taunton, where we regret to say the buckle worn by the Duke of Monmouth, and Lord Feversham's dish are now no longer[1] with the other interesting relics of the fight at Sedgemoor.

[1] Illustrations of these relics are in *King Monmouth*.

ANCIENT SCREEN, CURRY RIVEL CHURCH.

FIREPLACE, LYTES CARY.

At Barrington Court and White Lackington manor-house, both near Ilminster, Monmouth was entertained in princely state during his progress through the western counties to win popularity. The former is a plain gabled house (a portion only of the original) which has suffered by the insertion of sash windows. It seems to bear out its name, for it is very white and staring. But Barrington is one of the most perfect Elizabethan houses in Somersetshire, that is to say exteriorly, for the inside has long since been stripped and modernised. The myriad of pinnacles upon its gable ends, and its general appearance, recall the stately Sussex mansion Wakehurst: the situation, however, is vastly different, for it stands bare of trees on a wide extensive flat. The Spekes of White Lackington and the Strodes of Barrington, it goes without saying, were notorious Whigs; and though the duke's hosts favoured his cause, they both managed to save their necks when the terrible Jeffreys came down upon his memorable Progress. But the name of Speke was enough for the judge, and the youngest son of White Lackington, whose sins did not extend beyond shaking hands with his father's illustrious guest, was swung up on a tree at Ilminster. In the lovely fields around the manor-house it is difficult to imagine a throng of twenty thousand who accompanied the popular duke.

The giant Spanish chestnut tree beneath which Monmouth dined in public, and which had braved the tempests of many centuries, fell, alas! a victim to the storm of March, 2, 1897, and with the destruction of "Monmouth's tree" a link with 1680 has departed never to return. Barrington, we understand, has recently been taken under the protecting wing of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, for which all those interested in domestic architecture as well as buildings of historic association must feel grateful.

The little town of South Petherton, midway between Ilminster and Ilchester, is full of old nooks and corners, from its ancient cruciform church to the old hostelry in the High Street. From a very early date it was a place of great importance; but since the days of the Saxon monarch who resided there, the Daubeneys have stamped their identity upon King Ina's palace, of which there are picturesque Tudor remains incorporated in a modern dwelling, which to our mind has robbed it of the poetry it possessed when in a ruinous condition. The villages of Martock above and Hinton St. George below are also full of interest; and both possess their ancient market-crosses, but now curtailed and converted into sun-dials with stone-step massive bases. But the glory of Martock is its grand old church (where Fairfax and Cromwell offered up a prayer for the capture

BARRINGTON COURT.

of Bridgwater in 1645), whose carved black oak roof is one of the finest in the west of England.[1] The ancient seat of the Pouletts is an extensive but by no means beautiful house. It has a squat appearance, being only two storeys high, with battlemented towers at the angles and Georgian and Victorian Gothic sash-windows; but on the southern side, a pierced parapet and classic windows give it a less barrack-like appearance. Sir Amias Poulett (or Paulet, as it was formerly spelled), the grandson of the builder of the house, who won his spurs at the battle of Newark-on-Trent, is principally famous from the fact that he put Wolsey in the stocks when that great person held the living of Lymington, and upon one occasion took more than was good for him. But the cardinal afterwards had his revenge, and put fine upon Sir Amias to build the gate of the Middle Temple, which formerly bore the prelate's arms elaborately carved, as a peace-offering from Sir Amias. Lymington in Hampshire is often associated with the stocks' episode, but Lymington near Ilchester, and some ten miles from Hinton, was the place. Sir Amias had the custody of Mary Queen of Scots during the latter part of her long imprisonment, and to him the "Good Queen" (?) more than hinted that it would be a kindness to

[1] The open roof of the manor-house, now a cooper's shop, is also worth inspection.

hasten her victim's end by private assassination. Paulet, however, had a conscience, so Elizabeth had to take upon herself the responsibility of Mary's execution.

The historic stocks of Lymington are now no more, but beneath a big elm tree on the village green at Tintinhull, close by, they still are flourishing. Tintinhull, like Trent and other neighbouring villages, is full of picturesque old houses, sturdy stone Jacobean and Tudor cottages, with garden borderings of slabs of stone set up edgeways, and slabs of stone running along the footway in a delightfully primitive fashion. Tintinhull Court is a stately old pile dating from the reign of Henry VIII. Its oldest side faces the garden, but the main front is a good type of the seventeenth century. We will not repeat here the particulars of Charles II.'s concealment at the old seat of the Wyndhams after the battle of Worcester;[1] but on the spot, and though the greater part of the house has been rebuilt, one may realise the incidents in that romantic episode, for the village of Trent to-day is much the same as the village of 1651.

The manor-house of Sandford Orcas, to the north-east of Trent (which by the way now belongs to Dorset), is quite a gem of early-Elizabethan architecture, with crests upon the gable ends, and the Tudor and Knoyle arms and graceful panels

[1] See *The Flight of the King* and *After Worcester Fight.*

HINTON ST. GEORGE.

SANDFORD ORCAS MANOR-HOUSE.

outline, but attractive in colour, for grey-green lichens and the peculiar rusty tint of stone blend in perfect sympathy. Picture this house and church in crude white stone, unmellowed and toned by time, and half its charm would be gone. Does not this open up a question worth consideration? A modern house is built with conscientious exactitude in imitation of some beautiful existing example of Gothic or Renaissance architecture. Every detail is perfect, but the result is harsh and new. One must wait almost a lifetime before it makes a picture really pleasing to the eye. Therefore why not take some measures to tone down the staring stone or obtrusive red-brick before the masonry is constructed? True, there are a few exceptions where additions have been made to ancient houses, which cannot be detected; but in the case of an entirely new house, does it often occur to the builder how much more pleasing would be the result if the exterior of his house were more in harmony with the old oak fittings and ancient furniture with which it is his ambition to fill it? Would that all such houses were built of Ham Hill stone, for it has the peculiarity of imparting age much more rapidly than any other.

It is this that gives so venerable an appearance to Montacute House; for, compared with many mansions coeval with it, the ancestral seat of the Phelips family looks quite double the age.

The imposing height of Montacute as compared, for instance, with Hinton St. George, gives it stateliness and grandeur, while the other has none. Like Hardwick, the front of the house is one mass of windows; but it has not that formal spare appearance, for here there are rounded gables to break the outline. In niches between the windows and over the central gable stand the stone representations of such varied celebrities as Charlemagne, King Arthur, Pompey, Cæsar, Alexander the Great, Moses, Joshua, Godfrey de Bouillon, and Judas Maccabeus. They look down upon a trim old garden walled in by a balustraded and pinnacled enclosure, with Moorish-like pavilions or music-rooms at the corners. As a specimen of elaborate Elizabethan architecture within and without, Montacute is unique. In Nash's *Mansions* there is a drawing of the western front, which is still more elaborate in detail, and is earlier in date than the rest of the house; and this may be accounted for as it was added when Clifton Maybank (another house of the Phelips') was dismantled many years ago. But of this old house there are yet some interesting remains.[1] Inside there is a similarity also to Hardwick with its wide stone staircase and its ornamental Elizabethan doorways and fireplaces. The hospitality in the good old days was in keeping with

[1] See illustration in *King Monmouth.*

the lordly appearance of the mansion. Over the entrance may still be read the cheery greeting:

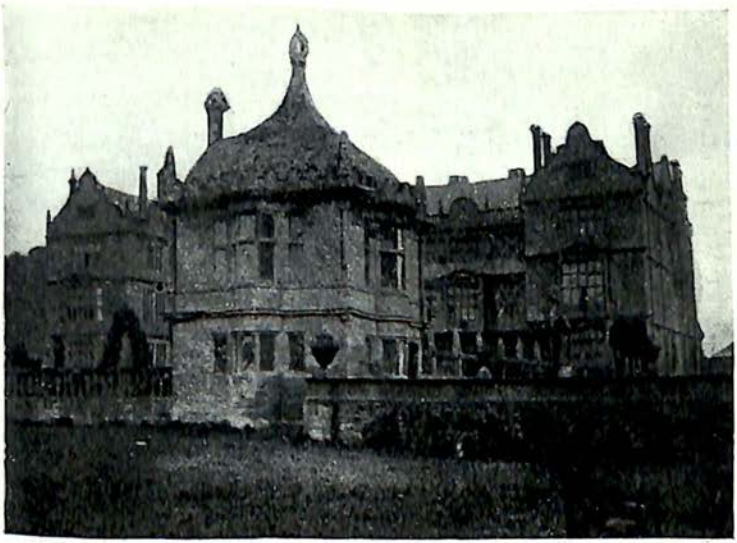
> "Through this wide opening gate,
> None come too early, none return too late."

But in these degenerate days the odds are that advantage would be taken of such hospitality; and one marvels at the open-handed generosity such as existed at old Bramall Hall in Cheshire, where the common road led right through the squire's great hall,[1] where there was always kept a plentiful supply of strong ale to cheer the traveller on his way. There can have been but few tramps in those days, or they must have been far more modest than they are to-day.

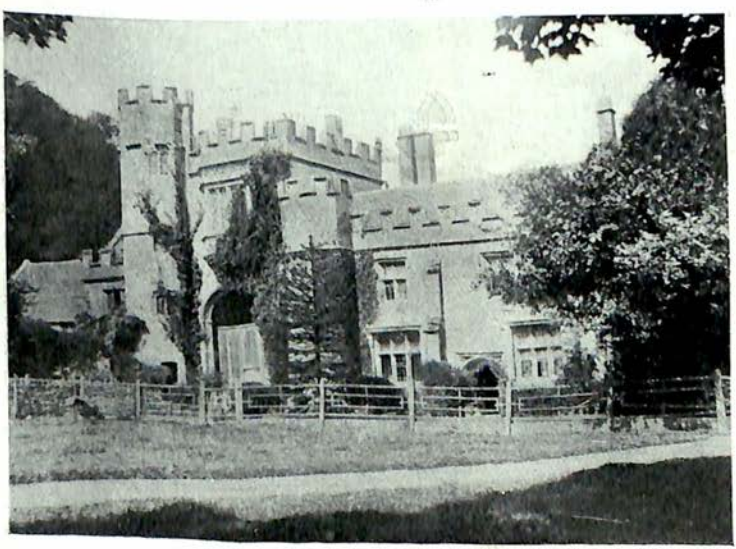
Montacute Priory, near the village, has a fine Perpendicular tower and other picturesque remains. To see it at its best, one should visit the village late in autumn, when the Virginia creeper, which covers the ancient walls, has turned to brilliant red. Other buildings under similar conditions may look as lovely, but we can recollect nothing to equal this old farmstead in its clinging robes of gold and scarlet.

There are many interesting old inns in this part of Somersetshire, notably in the town of

[1] This was formerly the case at "Payne's Place," Worcestershire, a house mentioned in another chapter.



MONTACUTE HOUSE.



MONTACUTE PRIORY.

Yeovil, where the "George" and "Angel" are *vis-à-vis*, and can compare notes as to whose recollections go back the farthest. The wide open fireplaces and mullioned windows of the former are of the time of Elizabeth or earlier, but the stone Gothic arched doorway and traceried windows of the latter can go a century better. But important as they both have been in their day, neither has had the luck or energy to keep pace with the times sufficiently to hold younger generations of inns subservient. The old "Green Dragon" at Combe St. Nicholas, near Ilminster, possessed a remarkable carved oak settle in its bar-parlour. It was elaborately carved, the back being lined with the graceful linen-fold panels. At the arm or corner were two figures, one suspended over the other, the upper one representing a bishop in the act of preaching. They were known as "the parson and clerk"; but when we saw the settle the "parson" was missing, having mysteriously disappeared some time before. The "clerk" was so worn out, having occupied his post so for centuries, that his features were scarcely recognisable; but who can wonder when he had been preached to for close upon four hundred years! To be "overlooked" in remote parts of Somersetshire means certain misfortune. Many a poor unoffending old woman, suspected of "overlooking" people, has been knocked on the

head that her blood might be "drawn" to counteract the spell. Probably the parson's attitude aroused suspicion, and he was quietly put away; but as his head had not been broken neither had the spell, and the last we heard of the "Green Dragon" was that it had been burnt down.

The old landlady we remember had a firm belief that the death of one of her sons was foretold by a death's-head moth flying in at the window and settling on his forehead when he was asleep in his cradle. The child, a beautiful boy, then in perfect health, was doomed, and her eldest son immediately set forth with his gun to shoot the first bird he chanced to see, to break the spell. However, that night the child died; and upon the wall in a glass case was the stuffed bird as well as the moth, a melancholy memento of the tragedy of thirty years ago.

IN WESTERN SOMERSET

Some of the prettiest nooks of old-world "Zoomerzet" are to be found under the lovely heather-clad Quantock Hills. The beauty of the scenery has inspired Coleridge, Wordsworth, and many famous men, not the least of whom was poor Richard Jeffreys, who has written sympathetically of the delightful vale to the west of the range.

To the north and north-west of Taunton the churches of Kingston and Bishop's Lydeard are both remarkable for their graceful early-Tudor towers. Of the two, the former is the finer specimen of Perpendicular work, the soft salmon-yellow colour of the Ham stone being particularly pleasing to the eye. The situation of the church is fine, commanding grand views; and at the intersection of the roads to Asholt and Bridgwater one gets a glorious prospect of Taunton and the blue Blackdown Hills beyond on one side, and on the other the sea and the distant Welsh mountains.

Both churches have good bench-ends full four hundred years old, the designs upon them being as clearly cut as if they had been executed only

a few years ago. One of them at Bishop's Lydeard represents a windmill, from which we gather that those useful structures were much the same as those with which we are familiar to-day.

At Cothelstone to the north, approached by a romantic winding road embosomed in lofty beech trees which dip suddenly down into a picturesque dell, the church and manor-house nestle cosily together, surrounded by hills and hanging woods. It is a typical Jacobean manor-house of stone, with ball-surmounted gables and heavy mullioned windows, approached from the road through an imposing archway, with a gatehouse beyond containing curious little niches and windows. In the gardens an old banqueting-room and ruined summer-house complete the picturesque group of buildings. The church has some fine tombs. One of the lords of the earlier manor-house reclines full length in Edwardian armour, his gauntleted hands bearing a remarkable resemblance to a pair of boxing-gloves. A descendant, Sir John Stawel, who fought valiantly for Charles in the Civil War, lies also in the church. For his loyalty his house was ruined and his estate sold by the Parliament, but his son was made a peer by the Merry Monarch in acknowledgment of his father's services. "The Lodge," an old landmark at Cothelstone, can boast a view of no less than

CROWCOMBE.

OLD HOUSE, CROWCOMBE.

fourteen counties, and from a gap in the Blackdown Hills, Halsdown by Exeter may be seen, while close at hand Will's Neck looms dark against the sky.

Beneath the rolling Quantocks the road runs seawards, and at Crowcombe, embowered in woods, brings us to another picturesque group: the church on one side and a dilapidated Tudor building on the other. It is called the "Church House," and, alas! by its ruinous condition one may judge its days are numbered, although its solid timber Gothic roof, now open to the sky, looks still good for a couple of centuries more. A crazy flight of stone steps leads to the upper storey, or rather what remains of it, the floor boards having long since disappeared. In the basement, nature has asserted itself, and weeds and brambles are growing in profusion. This lower part of the building was once used as almshouses, the Tudor-headed doors leading into the several apartments. The upper storey was the schoolroom, and had a distinct landlord from the basement. Difficulties consequently arose; for when the owner of the schoolroom suggested restorations to the roof, the proprietor of the almshouses declined to participate in the expense, declaring that it was his intention to pull his portion of the building down! A more striking example of a house divided against itself could not be found, hence

the forlorn condition of the joint establishment of youth and age.

There are fine carved bench-ends in the church, one bearing the date 1534 in Roman figures. Upon another is represented two men in desperate combat with a double-headed dragon. In the churchyard there is a cross, and facing the village street another, the cross complete, which is exceptional.

Crowcombe Court, a stately red-brick house of the latter part of the seventeenth century, has replaced the older seat of the Carews. Among the fine collection of Vandycks is a full-length of Charles I. and his queen, given by the second Charles to the family in acknowledgment of their loyalty. Queen Henrietta looks prettier here than in many of her portraits. There is also a fine Vandyck of James Stuart, Duke of Richmond, and of Lady Herbert, and some of Lely's beauties, including Nell Gwynn and the Countess of Falmouth, whose buxom face recalls some of de Gramont's liveliest pages.

A few miles to the east of Crowcombe, on the other side of the range of hills, is the moated castle of Enmore, whose ponderous drawbridge can still be raised and lowered like that at Helmingham. It is a formidable barrack-like building of red stone, not of any great antiquity. In the earlier structure lived Elizabeth Malet, the handsome young heiress with whom the madcap Earl

of Rochester ran away. Pepys on May 28, 1665, relates "a story of my Lord Rochester's running away on Friday night last with Mrs. Mallett, the great beauty of fortune and the north, who had supped at Whitehall with Mrs. Stewart, and was going home to her lodgings with her grandfather my Lord Haly [Hawley] by coach; and was at Charing Cross seized on by both horse and foot men, and forcibly taken from him and put into a coach with six horses, and two women provided to receive her, and carried away. Upon immediate pursuit, my Lord of Rochester (for whom the king had spoken to the lady often, but with no success) was taken at Uxbridge; but the lady is not yet heard of, and the king mighty angry, and the lord sent to the Tower." As may be supposed, with so flighty a husband the pair did not live happily ever after.[1]

The Enmore estate passed to Anne, the eldest of their three daughters, who married a Baynton of Spye Park near Melksham, where memories of the profligate earl linger, as they do at Adderbury.

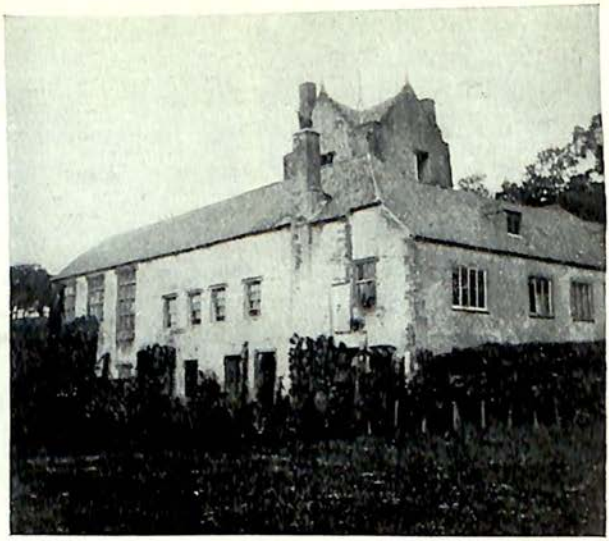
The famous "Abode" at Spaxton, as impenetrable as Enmore although it has no drawbridge, is close at hand. An adjacent hill, locally said to be a short cut to heaven, commands a superb view of the surrounding country. The original founder

[1] See *Some Beauties of the Seventeenth Century.*

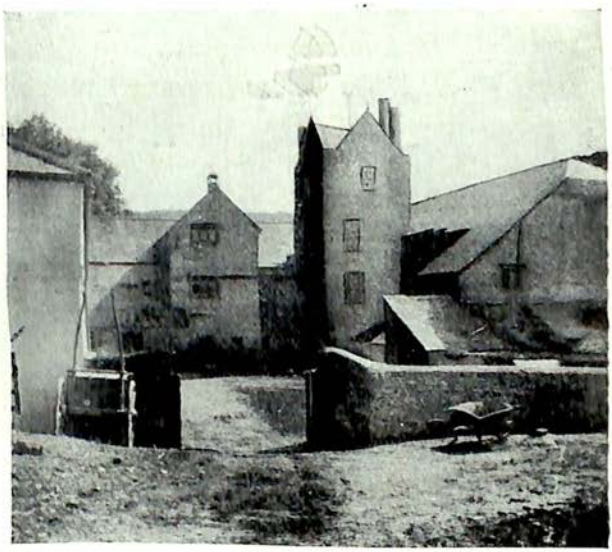
of the sect could scarcely have found a prettier nook in England.

A few miles to the north-west of Crowcombe is the picturesque village of Monksilver, the church of which is rich in oak carvings of the fifteenth century. The pulpit and bench-ends are particularly fine, but the screen has been much mutilated. There are some grotesque gargoyles, one representing a large-mouthed gentleman having his teeth extracted.

Near Monksilver is the old seat of the Sydenhams, Combe Sydenham, a fine old mansion, whose lofty square tower is un-English in appearance. The house was built by Sir George Sydenham in 1580, who is locally said still to have an unpleasant way of galloping down the glen at midnight. Perhaps he is uneasy in his mind about the huge cannon-ball in the hall, which he is said to have fired as a sign to his lady-love that he was going to follow after and claim her as his bride. There are portraits of some bewigged Sydenhams of the following century, the famous doctor, perchance, and his soldier brother, Colonel William the Parliamentarian. Some rusty old swords hang on the walls, and there is a curious painted screen of Charles II.'s time which is sadly in need of repairs. The servants' hall, with its open fireplace and tall-backed settle, remains much as it has been for two



COMBE, SYDENHAM.



COMBE, SYDENHAM.

hundred years or more. All these things point to the fact that the same family has been in possession for generations: at least it was owned by a Sydenham not so many years ago. An effigy of Sir George with his two wives (perhaps this is the cause of his uneasiness) may be seen in Stogumber church, about a mile away.

At the back of Combe Sydenham are the remains of an old mill. The wheel has disappeared, and the waterfall splashing in the streamlet below, together with an ancient barn adjacent, form a delightful picture.

To the west is Nettlecombe, a fine old gabled house, dating from the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, containing ancestral portraits of the Trevelyans and some curious relics, among which is a miniature of Charles the martyr worked in his own hair. The estate belonged originally to the Raleighs, whose name is retained in Raleigh Down and Raleigh's Cross by Brendon Hill.

Elworthy church, to the south-east, commands a fine position, and boasts a painted screen bearing the date 1632 and some carved bench-ends. But the churchyard looked sadly neglected and weed-grown. The great limb of a huge yew tree overhangs the stocks, which we are grateful to observe have been restored, and not allowed to decay as those at Crowcombe.

From here we went farther to the south-east in search of a place locally called "Golden Farm," or properly Gaulden, where, depicted on a plaster ceiling of ancient date, are various scenes from biblical history, from the temptation of Adam downwards. Now, whether the good gentleman who rents the farm has been besieged by classes for the young anxious to learn on the Kindergarten system, or whether the arms of the Turberville family that figure upon a mantelpiece has connected the house with a certain well-known novel and brought about an American invasion, the fact remains that his equanimity has evidently become disturbed. His door was closed, and he was proud that he could boast that he had turned people away who had come expressly across the Atlantic! Sadly we turned away, but with inward congratulations that we had not come quite so far, when, lo! the worthy farmer showed signs of relenting. We might come in for half a guinea, he said condescendingly. We thanked him kindly and declined, observing that the fee at Windsor Castle was more than ten times less. 'Tis little wonder that they call it "Golden Farm."

Equidistant from Monksilver to the north-west is Old Cleeve, a pretty little village near the coast, whose ruined Cistercian abbey has nooks and corners to delight the artist or anti-

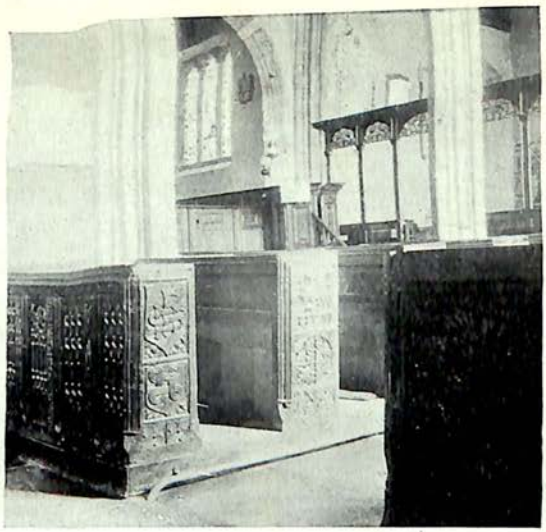
quarian. The grey old gatehouse, with a little stream close by, make a delightful picture, indeed from every point of view the ancient walls and arches, with their farmyard surroundings, form picturesque groups. In one of the walls is a huge circular window: the rose window of the sacristy that has lost its tracery. Viewed from the interior, the round picture of blue sky and meadows gay with buttercups makes a striking contrast with the deep shadow within the cold grey walls. A flight of stone steps leads to the refectory, whose rounded carved oak roof and projecting figure ornaments and bosses are in excellent preservation. There is a great open fireplace and the tracery in the windows is intact. A painting in distemper on the farther wall represents the Crucifixion, and as far as artistic merit is concerned better by far than the colossal figure conspicuous in the Roman Catholic cathedral at Westminster.

The road from here to Dunster is delightful, and as you approach the quaint old town—for it is a town, difficult as it is to believe it—the castle stands high up on the left embosomed in trees, a real fairy-tale sort of fortress it appears, with a watch-tower perched up on another wooded hill to balance it. The Luttrells have lived here for centuries, and during the Civil War it was for long a Royalist stronghold,

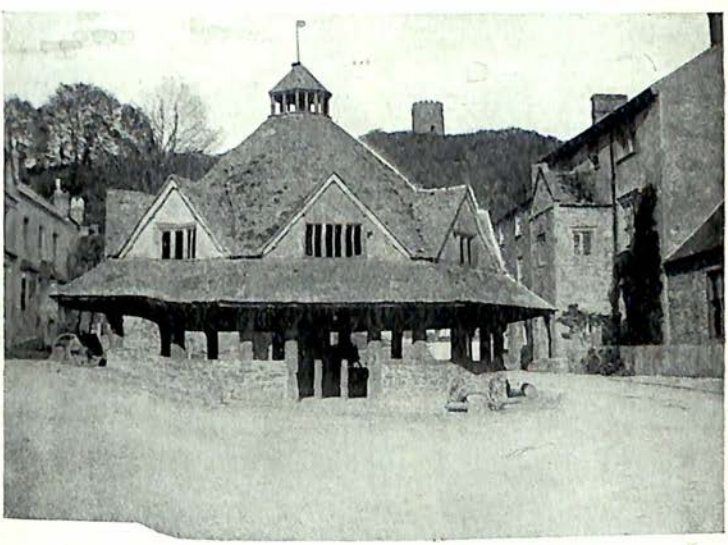
held by Colonel Wyndham, the governor. The gallant colonel's spirited answer to the threat of the Parliamentarians to place his aged mother in their front ranks to receive the fury of his cannon should he refuse to deliver up the castle, is a fine example of loyalty. "If ye doe what you threaten," he said, "you doe the most barbarous and villanous act was ever done. My mother I honour, but the cause I fight for and the masters I serve, are God and the King. Mother, doe you forgive me and give me your blessing, and tell the rebells answer for spilling that blood of yours which I would save with the loss of mine own, if I had enough for both my master and your selfe." But fortunately matters did not come to a climax, for Lord Wentworth appeared upon the scene with a strong force and relieved the beleaguered garrison. The loyalty of old Lady Wyndham and her son was further put to the test a few years afterwards when young King Charles lay concealed in their house at Trent near Sherborne.[1]

Within the castle there is a curious hiding-place which carries us back to those troublous times. Local tradition has connected it in error with the visit of the second Charles, whose room is still pointed out; but the king was then not a fugitive, otherwise doubtless this secret chamber

[1] See *Flight of the King* and *After Worcester Fight.*



CROWCOMBE CHURCH.—*See page* 150



DUNSTER.

would have proved as useful to him as that at Trent House in 1651.

The main street of Dunster, with its irregular outline of houses climbing up a hill, and the quaintest old market-house at the top backed by a dense maze of foliage beyond, is exceedingly picturesque. Judging from the hole made by a cannon-ball from the castle in one of the oaken beams of this remarkable "yarn market," poor Lady Wyndham had a lucky escape. The marvel is the old structure has remained until now in so delightful an unrestored condition. It has the colour which age alone can impart, a red purple-grey which, contrasted with the background as we saw it of laburnum and may, formed a picture long to be remembered. The old inn, the "Luttrell Arms," has many points of interest—some fine fifteenth-century woodwork in the courtyard, a carved ceiling, and a rich Elizabethan fireplace; but doubtless from the fact that the landlord gets too many inquiries about these things, he is tardy in showing them. The church has one of the finest carved oak screens of Henry VI.'s reign in England, which to our mind looks much better in its unpainted state. One has but to go to Carhampton, close by, to make a comparison. The paint may be in excellent taste, and like it was originally; but when the original paint has gone, is it not best

to leave the woodwork plain? Under these conditions the screen at least looks old, but the fine screen at Carhampton does not. A smaller screen in the transept of Dunster church presents yet more bold and beautiful design in the carving; and about this and the ancient tombs and altar, the bright and intelligent old lady who shows one round has a fund of information to impart. She is very proud, and naturally so, of the interesting building under her charge. Up a side street is the nunnery with its slate-hung front: a lofty, curious building some three centuries old or more.

Minehead Church is equally interesting. It stands high up overlooking the sea, and commands a magnificent prospect of the hanging-woods of Dunster and the heights of Dunkery. The rood-screen is good, but has been mutilated in parts. The ancient oak coffer is remarkable for the bold relief of its carving, representing the arms of Fitz-James quartered with Turberville as it occurs in Bere Regis church.

There is a fine recumbent effigy of a man in robes, said to be a famous lawyer named Bracton, although he has much the appearance of a cleric. Whether it was considered conclusive proof that the person interred was a lawyer from the fact that on being opened the skull revealed a double row of upper teeth, we do not know, but there

are other evidences. A victim of insomnia is said to resemble a lawyer, because he lies on one side then turns round and lies on the other; and this is precisely what this effigy did. We had the good fortune to fall in with the organist of St. Michael, and he declared that he had taken a photograph of the worthy in which the figure had *changed its position*, the head being where the feet should be—everything else in the picture being precisely in its right position!

In the church is one of those quaint little figures which in former years was worked by the clock —"Jack-smite-the-clock," of which there are examples at Southwold, Blythborough, etc. The former rector held the living for seventy years, and some trouble was caused because he had willed that some of the ancient parish documents were to be interred with him robed in his Geneva gown. It is said his wish was duly carried out, but the papers were afterwards rescued.

Bossington, on the coast to the north-west of Porlock, is a delightful little village, lying at the foot of the great heather-clad hills. The rushing stream and the moss and lichen everywhere add much to its picturesqueness, but we should imagine there is too much shade and damp to be enjoyable in the winter. In the middle of the narrow road stands a very ancient walnut tree with twisted limbs and roots, one of many walnut trees

in the village. There are cosy ancient thatched cottages in Porlock, and the "Ship Inn," with its panelled walls, is the most inviting of hostelries, but the popular novel *Lorna Doone* has rather spoiled the primitive aspect of the place by introducing some buildings out of keeping with the rest.

The weary traveller has a great treat in store, for the view from the top of Porlock Hill is remarkable. But it is well worth the climb, and by the old road it is indeed a climb! When we were there it was a misty day in June, and we never remember so remarkable a prospect as from the summit. The brilliant gorse stood out against the varying shades of green and purple of the moorland, and below all that could be seen was one solid mass of snow-white cloud, the outline of which was sharply defined against a distant glimpse of the soft blue sea and the deep blue Glamorganshire hills, looking wonderfully like a glacier-field. Next morning came the news that in the mist the warship *Montagu* had run on the rocks by Lundy.

The romantic scenery of Lynmouth and Lynton is too well known to call for any particular description here. Little wonder that one sees so many honeymoon couples wandering everywhere about the lovely lanes. Lovers of old oak, too, will find all that they desire at Lynmouth, for here is the

most tempting antique repository, calculated to make tourist collectors of Chippendale and oak wish they had economised more in their hotel bills. Motor cars sail easily down into the valley from Porlock, but a sudden twist in the steep ascent to Lynton causes many a snort and groan accompanied by an extra scent of petrol.

But we have overstepped the county line and are in Devon.

IN DEVON AND DORSET

THOSE who have never been to Clovelly can have no idea of its quaintness, no matter what descriptions they have read or pictures they may have seen. One goes there expecting to find the little place exactly as he imagines it to be, and is agreeably surprised to find it is quite different. It is so unlike any other place, that one looks back at it more as a dream than a real recollection. We do not hint that the everlasting climb up and down may be likened to a nightmare. Not a bit of it. Though we gasp and sink with fatigue, we have still breath enough left in our body to sing in praise. Were the steps more steep and less rambling, perhaps we should not be so satisfied. What excellent exercise for muscular-leg development. But how about the older part of the inhabitants?

We had the honour to converse with the oldest Clovellian, a hale and hearty fisherman, who, by no means tardy in introducing himself, promptly proceeded to business. For twopence we might take his photograph. We thanked him kindly,

and having disbursed that sum reserved our plates for inanimate curiosities.

It is gratifying to learn that there is no room for "improvement" at Clovelly, and there are fewer houses than there used to be. Consequently there is nothing new and out of harmony. The cottages are really old and quaint, not as we expected to find them, imitations, like half the houses in Chester.

Even the "New Inn" is delightfully old, with queer little rooms and corners, and little weather-cock figures above the sign, of the time of Nelson. It is a novel experience to arrive there in the dusk and walk (?) down the High Street to the sea. The most temperate will stumble and roll about as if he had sampled the cellar through, and ten to one but he doesn't finally take an unexpected header into the sea.

But granted he reaches the end of the little pier (which projects after the fashion of the "Cobb" at Lyme Regis), he will find a hundred lights from the cottages as if lanterns were hung on the hillside, their long reflections rippling in the water.

The place is as much a surprise as ever in broad daylight. One might be in Spain or Italy. Donkeys travel up and down the weed-grown cobble steps carrying projecting loads balanced on their backs. Indeed, one is quite surprised

to hear the people speaking English, or rather Devonshire, the prettiest dialect. In the daylight the little balconied-houses overhanging the sea look more like pigeon-cots nailed to the steep rock, and one almost wonders how the inhabitants can get in. Long may Clovelly remain as it is now, the quaintest little place in England!

The town of Barnstaple is an excellent centre for exploration, and the antiquity of the "Golden Lion" is a guarantee of comfort. It was a mansion of the Earls of Bath, and upon a richly moulded ceiling, with enormous pendants of the date of James the First, are depicted biblical subjects, including the whole contents of the Ark, or a good proportion of it. The spire of the church of SS. Peter and Paul looks quite as out of the perpendicular as the spire at Chesterfield. There are some good Jacobean tombs, but nothing else in particular.

The aged inmates of the almshouses point out the bullet-marks in their oaken door, made when the Royalists fortified the town in 1645. Lord Clarendon, who was governor of the town, tells us that here it was Prince Charles first received the fatal news of the battle of Naseby. The prince had been sent to Barnstaple for security. The house he lodged at in the High Street was formerly pointed out, but has disappeared.

The poet Gay was a native of the town, and early in the nineteenth century some of his manu-

scripts were discovered in the secret drawer of an old oak chair that had passed from a kinsman on to a dealer in antiques who lived in the High Street.

Close to the town is Pilton, whose church is full of interest. The carved oak hood of the prior's chair, which dates from Henry VII.'s reign, serves the purpose now to support the cover of the font. At the side may be seen an iron staple to which in former years the Bible was chained. From the fine Gothic stone pulpit projects a painted metal arm and hand which holds a Jacobean hour-glass. The screen and parclose screen are also good, and the communion rails and table in the vestry are of Elizabethan date. The church pewter is also worth notice, as well as an old pitch pipe for starting the choir. The porch bears evidence that the tower was roughly handled when Fairfax captured Barnstaple in 1646. The existing tower was built fifty years later.

Nowhere have we seen so fine and perfect a collection of carved oak benches as at Braunton, a few miles to the north-west of Pilton. They are as firm and solid as when first set up in Henry VII.'s reign, and are rich in carvings, as is the graceful wide-spanned roof. One of the bosses represents a sow and her litter, who by tradition suggested the idea of the holy edifice being erected by Saint Branock. A window showing some of

this good person's belongings, spoken of in the tenth commandment, is mentioned by Leland, but since then possibly some local antiquary may have disregarded what is forbidden in that ancient law. Presumably there have been attempts also to annex the ruins of the patron-saint's chapel, for the villagers pride themselves that all attempts to remove them have failed. What an object-lesson to the jerry builders of to-day!

Farther to the north-west and we get to Croyde Bay, which perhaps one day may have a future on account of its open sea and sands. At present it looks in the early transition state.

Tawstock, to the south of Barnstaple, is said to possess the best manor, the noblest mansion, the finest church, and the richest rectory in the county. Certainly the church could not easily be rivalled (the "Westminster of the West," as it is called) in its picturesque position, surrounded by hills and woods, with the old gateway of the manor-house, the sole remains of the original "Court," flanking the winding road which leads down to it: we almost feel justified in adding to these superlatives the "handsomest Jacobean tomb, and the most elaborate Elizabethan pew," but will not commit ourselves so far. The former, on the left-hand side of the altar, is that of the first Earl of Bath (Bourchier) and his wife. Above their recumbent effigies is a great display of armorial

bearings, with sixty-four quarterings hung upon a vine, showing the intermarriages of the principal families of England. There are many other fine monuments, that of Rachael, the last Countess of Bath, who died in Charles II.'s reign, representing a lifelike and exceedingly graceful figure in white marble. She was the daughter of Francis, Earl of Westmoreland, and married secondly, Lionel, third Earl of Middlesex, who predeceased her. The Elizabethan pew of the Bourchier-Wrays, lords of the manor, has a canopy, and is richly carved; but it was originally of larger dimensions. Close by are some fine bench-ends, one of which displays the arms of Henry VII. High aloft is a curious Elizabethan oak gallery by which the ringers reach the tower, upon which are carvings of the vine pattern, a favourite design in Devon. An early effigy in wood must not be forgotten, the recumbent figure of a female, supposed to be a Hankford, who brought the Tawstock estates into the Bourchiers' possession.

From northern Devonshire let us turn our attention to some nooks in the easternmost corner and in the adjoining part of Dorset.

Of all the villages along the coast-line here, Branscombe is the most beautiful and old-fashioned. Many of the ancient thatched and whitewashed cottages have Tudor doors and windows. Some of the best, alas! were con-

demned as being unsafe some fifteen years ago, among them one which in the old smuggling days had many convenient hiding-places for that industry, for Branscombe was every bit as notorious as the little bay of Beer. The church is, or was not long since, delightfully unrestored, for fortunately the good rector is one who does not believe in up-to-date things, and the sweeping changes which are rampant in places more accessible. It is the sort of comfortable old country church that we associate with the early days of David Copperfield or with Little Nell. Truly the high box-pews are not loved by antiquarians, but is it not better to leave them than replace them with something modern and uncomfortable? If the original oak benches of the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries could be replaced, that is entirely another matter. But they cannot, therefore let those who love old associations not banish the Georgian pews without a thought that they also form a link with the past. The church is cruciform, and principally of the Early English and Early Decorated periods, the old grey tower in the centre standing picturesquely out in the beautifully wooded valley. The village of Beer is also very charming, and the fisher folk fine types of men. It is delightful to watch the little fleet set sail; but in the summer the air in the tiny bay is

BINDON.

BINDON.

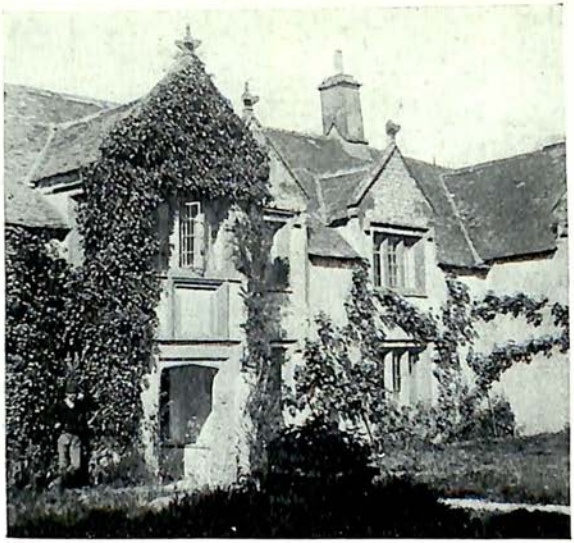
oppressive, and the effluvia of fish somewhat overpowering. The extensive caves here have done good service in the smuggling days.

Another charming village is Axmouth, situated on the river which gives its name. Old-fashioned cottages with gay little gardens straggle up the hill, down which the clearest of streams runs merrily, affording delight to a myriad of ducks who dip and paddle to their hearts' content. The church has Norman features, and the tower some quaint projecting gargoyles. From the other side of the river at high tide the old church and cluster of cottages around it, backed by the graceful slope of Hawksdown Hill behind, make a charming picture. High up in the hills, through typical Devonshire fern-clad lanes, is Bindon, an interesting Tudor house containing a chapel of the fifteenth century. The entrance from the road, with its circular stone gateway and gables with latticed mullioned-windows peeping over the moss-grown wall, is charming, as are also the old farm-buildings at the back, in which an enormous canopied well is conspicuous. But more gigantic still is the well at Bovey, another Tudor house, near Beer, which bears the reputation of being haunted. But with the exception of some gables at the back, Bovey is less picturesque than Bindon, owing, perhaps, to the fact that the roof has been re-slated.

More interesting are the remains of old Shute House, which lies inland some six or seven miles. This was a far more extensive mansion, as will be seen by the imposing embattled gateway and a remaining wing, which rather remind one of a bit of Haddon. Here during the Monmouth Rebellion the Royalist commander Christopher, second Duke of Albemarle, encamped on June 18, 1685, the same day that the other duke, the boon companion of his wilder days, entered Taunton. The house belonged then, as it does still, to the De la Poles.

Most of the old houses hereabouts are associated in some sort of way with the rebellion. Close upon the county border to the north-east stands Coaxden, a much modernised old farm, where stories are told of fugitives from Sedgemoor. How its occupant, Richard Cogan, being suspected as a Monmouth adherent, fled from his house to Axminster, where in the "Old Green Dragon Inn" the landlord's daughter secreted him between a feather-bed and the sacking of a bedstead. Kirke's "lambs" traced him to the house, but failed to hit upon his hiding-place. The story ends as all such stories should, the girl who preserved his life became his wife. The house is further interesting as the birthplace in 1602 of Sir Symonds D'Ewes the historian.

A couple of miles or so to the west is Wylde



WYLDE COURT.

CEILING IN THE GOLDEN LION, BARNSTAPLE.

Court, another interesting old farmhouse, much less restored, dating from Elizabeth's reign, with numerous pinnacled gable ends and characteristic entrance porch and oak panelled rooms. This and Pilsdon, another Tudor house a few miles to the west, at the foot of Pilsdon Pen, belonged to the Royalist Wyndhams, and in the troublous times they were looked upon with suspicion, and searched on one or two occasions by the Parliamentary soldiers. "Hellyer's Close," near Wylde Court, is so named because a Royalist commander, Colonel Hellyer, was taken prisoner and executed here by Cromwell's soldiers. At the time that Charles II., in 1651, attempted to get away to France from the coast of Dorset, Pilsdon was visited by a party of Cromwellian soldiers, and Sir Hugh Wyndham and his family secured in the hall while the house was thoroughly searched, suspicion even falling upon one of the ladies that she was the king in disguise.[1] Sir Hugh's monument may be seen at Silton in the extreme north corner of the county.

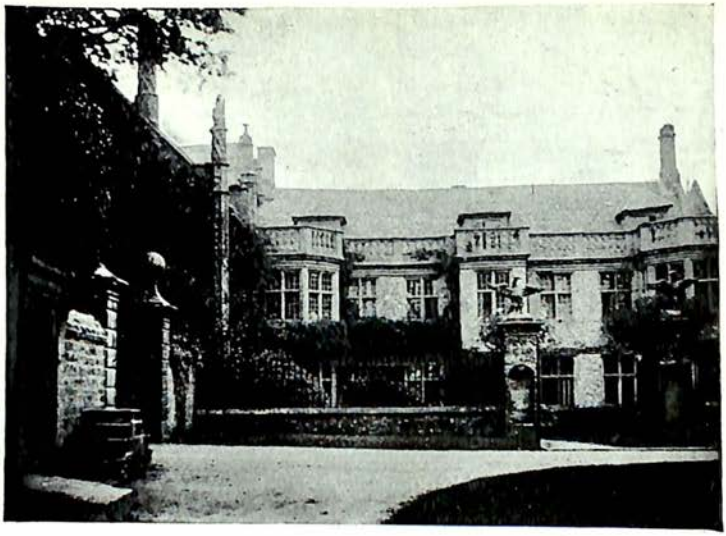
Chideock is a charming old-world village in the valley between Charmouth and Bridport, snugly perched between the cone-shaped eminence Colmer's Hill and Golden Cap, the gorse-covered headland, said to be the highest point between Dover and the Land's End. The castle of the

[1] See *Flight of the King.*

De Chideocks and Arundells, a famous stronghold built in Richard II.'s reign, long since has disappeared, but its moat can be traced. The fine old church exteriorly is one of the most picturesque in Dorsetshire, but the inside has been much restored and modernised. A handsome tomb of Sir John Arundell in armour is in the south aisle.

Longevity seems to be the order of the day round "Golden Cap." At Cold Harbour we chatted with a hearty old man enjoying his pipe by his cottage door. He was close on eighty; but there was still a generation over his head, for his father, evidently to show his son a good example, was hard at work digging potatoes in the back garden. We solicited the honour to photograph the pair, and asked the elder of the two if he would have a pipe. No, he didn't smoke, but he could drink, he said; and so, of course, we took the hint, and he with equal promptitude toddled up the lane, as digging potatoes at the age of ninety-nine is thirsty work.

There is a deep picturesque lane near Chideock called "Skenkzies" which at night-time is particularly dark, and held in awe, for there are stories of evil spirits lurking about; and little wonder, for close at hand is a farmhouse called "Hell!" Old customs and superstitions die hard in western Dorset. Forlorn and love-sick maidens as a special inducement for their lovers to appear,



MAPPERTON MANOR-HOUSE.

MELPLASH COURT.

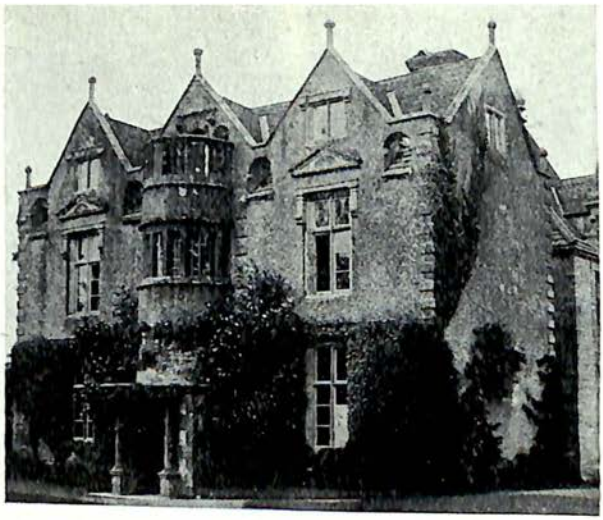
place their boots at right angles to one another in the form of a T upon retiring to roost. The charm is said to be irresistible; but there have been cases where it has failed, when the size has exceeded "men's eights."

To the north-west of Bridport and the south-west of Beaminster are two old houses within a couple of miles of one another, the manor-houses of Melplash and Mapperton. The former, a plain Elizabethan gabled house, is said to have been one of the many residences of Nell Gwyn. Whether the old Hall of Parnham, the seat of the Strodes, was honoured by a visit of the Merry Monarch we do not know. If so, it is possible Nell may have been housed at Melplash. Mapperton is a remarkably picturesque house, with projecting bays and a balustraded roof, above which are little dormer windows. Part of the house is evidently Jacobean and part dates from the reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, and the combination of styles, the niched entrance gates surmounted by eagles, the ornamental pinnacles, and the "upping-stock" beside the wall, make a most fantastic whole. It was once the seat of the Coker family.

There are some interesting old mansions within a few miles of Dorchester. Wolverton or Wolfeton manor-house, for example, and Waterstone and Athelhampton, the last two of which appear in Nash's *Mansions*. Each one

is entirely different from the other. Waterstone is a small late-Elizabethan or early-Jacobean house, with a quaint balustraded bay over the entrance porch, and some elaborate and graceful stonework upon a projecting gable that stands at right angles to it. This presumably was once the principal entrance. It is certainly quite unique and somewhat perplexing. At Wiston House in Sussex we remember having seen some very elaborate Elizabethan ornamentation upon a gable which really had no business there, although the effect was very pleasing: and here, perhaps, we have the same sort of thing. Wolverton is a fine early-Tudor building with battlemented tower and a stately array of lofty mullioned windows, and careful restoration has added to its picturesque appearance.

But sympathetic restoration may be seen at its best at Athelhampton. We took some photographs many years ago, when it was occupied as a farmhouse, and upon a recent visit could scarcely recognise it as the same. Not that the house has been much altered exteriorly, but the quaint old-fashioned gardens, with pinnacled Elizabethan walls, ancient fish-ponds and fountains, have sprung up and matured in a manner that had one not seen the gardens as they were, one would scarcely credit it. Wonders have been done within as well, and the great hall is very different



WATERSTONE.

ATHELHAMPTON.

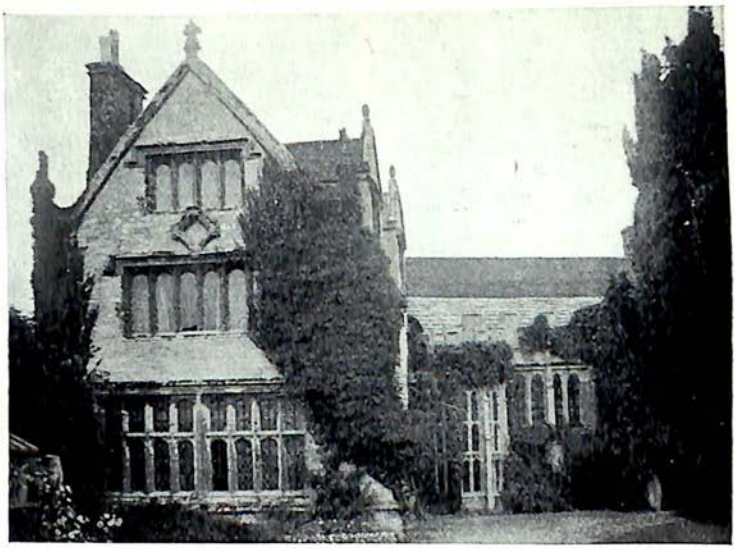
from what it was before the present owner came into possession. There are suits of armour and Gothic cabinets to carry us back to the days of doublet and trunk-hose and square-toed shoes. Where formerly were pigsties is now a terrace walk, and the quaint old circular dove-cot has been carried off bodily and planted where it balances to best advantage. But one thing we should like to see, and that is the ancient gate-house that was standing in Nash's time. There is his drawing to go by, and where everything has been done in such excellent taste one need have little fear that in a few years a new building would settle down harmoniously with the rest.

Close by is Puddletown, a pretty old village with a remarkable church, where, as at Athelhampton, everything is in harmony. It is the sort of church one reads about in novels, yet so seldom meets; and now we come to think of it, this village does figure in a popular Wessex novel. Doubtless there are some lovers of ecclesiastical architecture who would like to see the Jacobean woodwork cleared out and *modern* Henry VII. benches introduced to make the whole coeval. The towering three-decker pulpit is delightful, and so are the ancient pews, and the old gallery and staircase leading up to it. Within the Athelhampton chapel are mailed

effigies, and several ancient brasses to the Martin family who originally owned the mansion.

Bere Regis church, some six miles to the east of Puddletown, is also remarkable, particularly for its open hammer-beam roof from which project huge life-size figures of pilgrims, cardinals, bishops, etc., and monster heads suggestive of the pantomime. The whole is coloured, and the effect very rich and strikingly original. One can imagine how the younger school-children must be impressed with these awe-inspiring figures looking down upon them with steady gaze. There are two fine canopied tombs (one containing brasses dated 1596) to the Turburvilles, who possessed a moiety of the lordship since the Conquest. Their old manor-house, a few miles south at Wool, a red-brick Jacobean gabled house with roomy porch in which a great pendant is conspicuous, picturesquely situated by an old bridge and the winding reed-grown river, has of recent years obtained notoriety by Mr. Thomas Hardy's pen. We photographed the old house some years ago before it had been thus immortalised. Upon a recent visit we found the house desolate and empty. Had the good farmer flown in consequence, and sought an abode that had not become a literary landmark?

But the vicinity of Bere Regis had obtained notoriety of a tragic kind many centuries before



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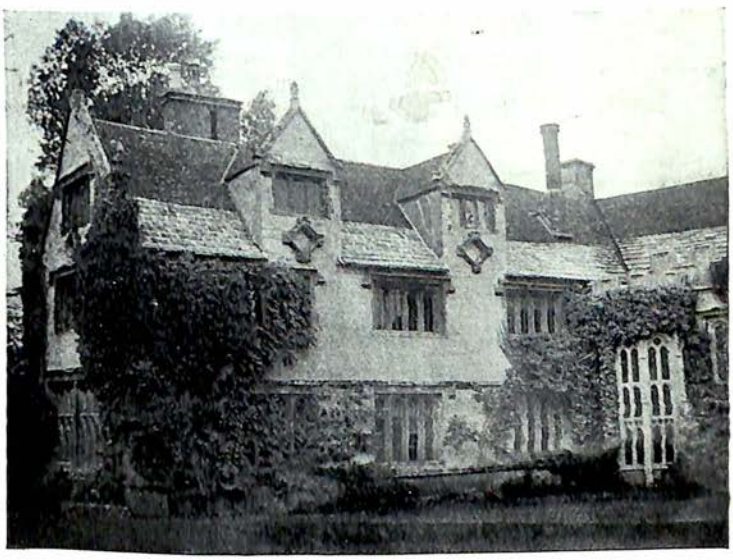
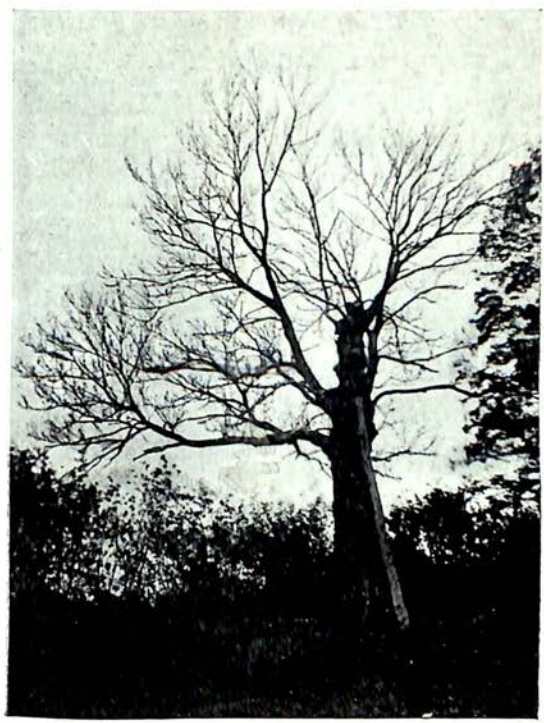


ATHELHAMPTON.

the birth of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, for that very undesirable lady, Queen Elfrida, retired there for peace and quietness after various deeds of darkness, one of which, according to the *Annals* of Ely, is said to have been inserting red-hot nails into Abbot Brithnoth's armpits; and from Lytchet Maltravers to the east of Bere came Sir John Maltravers to whose tender mercies the unfortunate Edward II. was delivered before he was done to death at Berkeley Castle. Sir John's monument is in the church; but as it was not the fashion in those days to enumerate the various virtues of the departed in laudatory verse, this particular act of charity is not recorded in suitable effusion.

Wimborne Minster to the north-east is too world-famed to call for any particular description here, but a word may be said about the first Free Library in the country. In past days, when there was no good Mr. Carnegie to cater for the welfare of millions, nor the finest classics to be purchased for sixpence, it was only natural, books being rare, that the local authorities should not have placed the same implicit trust in would-be readers as is shown by the British Museum Library authorities. The rusty iron chains securing the aged tomes to an iron rod above the queer old desks even after the lapse of centuries would hold their own. The literature

cannot be said to be of a much lighter nature than the bulky volumes in weight. The rarest specimens are placed in glass cases, and are calculated to make the mildest bibliomaniac full of envy. Before the Reformation the Minster was rich in holy relics, conspicuous among which was a part of St. Agatha's thigh. One of the most curious things still to be seen is a coffin brilliantly painted with armorial devices, placed in the niche of a wall, which according to the will of the occupant has to be touched up from year to year; and thus the memory of the worthy magistrate, Anthony Ettrick, is kept more actively alive than good King Ethelred who rests beneath the pavement by the altar. Ettrick lived at Holt Lodge near Woodlands, a few miles away in the direction of Cranborne; and when the Duke of Monmouth was captured in rustic garb in the vicinity, he was brought before the magistrate and removed from Holt to Ringwood, where at the "Angel Inn" the room in which he was kept prisoner is still pointed out. We have elsewhere described the old ash tree near Crowther's Farm beneath which the unfortunate fugitive from Sedgemoor was found. It is propped up, and has lost a limb, but is alive to-day, and surely should be protected by a railing and an inscription like other historic trees. To the north is St. Giles, the ancestral



MONMOUTH'S TREE.

home of the Earls of Shaftesbury, the first representative of which title, Anthony Ashley Cooper, worked so skilfully on Monmouth's ambition. When the Merry Monarch visited the noble politician at St. Giles, he little thought that his favourite son would be taken a prisoner as a traitor within only a mile or so of the mansion. A memento of the royal visit is still preserved in the form of a medicine chest that the king left behind, which in those days doubtless contained some of his favourite specific "Jesuit drops."

Another historic mansion is Kingston Lacy, to the west of Wimborne, the old seat of the Bankes family, which is rich in Stuart portraits as well as other valuable works of art. It is a typical square comfortable-looking Charles II. house, with dormer-windowed roof and wide projecting eaves. The staunch Royalist, James Butler, the great Duke of Ormonde, lived here in his latter years, and died here in 1688. The duke's intimate friend, Sir Robert Southwell, has left a graphic account of the last hours of the good old nobleman, which he concludes with the following:— "His Grace could remember some things that passed when he was but three years old. He was only four years old when his great-great-uncle Earl Thomas died in 1614, but he retained a perfect remembrance of him. That Earl lived

in the reigns of King Henry the Eighth, King Edward the Sixth, Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, and King James; and His Grace had seen King James the First, King Charles the First, King Charles the Second, and King James the Second; so that between them both they were contemporary with nine princes who ruled this land!"[1]

[1] *Hist. MSS. Com. Rep.* 7 App. p. 758.

HERE AND THERE IN SALOP AND STAFFORDSHIRE

THE important and ancient capital of Salop would indeed be insulted were it called a "nook" or "corner." Could it so be named, we might be allowed to let our enthusiasm run wild in this most delightful old town. Shrewsbury and Tewkesbury are to our mind far more interesting than Chester, which has so many imitation old houses to spoil the general harmony. At Shrewsbury or Tewkesbury there are very few mock antiques, and at every turn and corner there are ancient buildings to carry our fancy back to the important historical events that have happened in these places. One cannot but be thankful to the local authorities for preserving the mediæval aspect, and let us offer up a solemn prayer that the electric tramway fiend may never be permitted to enter.

Chirk Castle is so close upon the boundaries of Salop that we may include this corner of Denbighshire. It is the only border fortress of Wales still

inhabited, and is remarkably situated on an eminence high above the grand old trees of the park, or rather forest, surrounding it. It has stood many a siege, but its massive external walls look little the worse for it. They are of immense thickness, and so wide that two people abreast can walk upon the battlements. The huge round towers, with deep-set windows and loopholes, have a very formidable appearance as you climb the steep ascent from the picturesque vale beneath. It was built by the powerful family of Mortimer early in the fourteenth century. From the Mortimers and Beauchamps it came into the possession of Henry VIII.'s natural son, the Duke of Richmond and Somerset, and to Lord Seymour, brother of the Protector Somerset. Then the Earl of Leicester owned it in Elizabeth's time, and eventually Sir Thomas Myddelton, Lord Mayor in James I.'s reign. His son, Sir Thomas, fought valiantly for the Parliamentary side, and in 1644 had to besiege his own fortress. A letter from the governor, Sir John Watts, to Prince Rupert, which still hangs in the great hall, describes how the owner "attempted to worke into the castle with iron crowes and pickers under great plancks and tables, which they had erected against the castle side for their shelter: but my stones beate them off." In the following year Charles I. slept there on two occasions; and it

was here that he learned the defeat of the great Montrose. After the king's execution, Sir Thomas, like many others, began to show favour to the other side; and the year before the Restoration he was mixed up in Sir George Booth's Cheshire rising, and had to fortify his castle against General Lambert, to whom he eventually surrendered. But the general did not depart until he had disabled the fortress, and the damage done after the Restoration took £30,000 to repair. It was Sir Hugh, the younger brother of the first Sir Thomas Myddelton, who made the New River, which was opened on Michaelmas Day, 1613. A share in 1633 was valued at £3, 4s. 2d., and in 1899 one was sold for £125,000!

The various apartments are ranged round a large quadrangle, parts of which remind one somewhat of Haddon. On one side is the great hall, and opposite the servants' hall. The former, with its minstrels' gallery, heraldic glass, and ancient furniture, is full of interest. The walls are hung with various pieces of armour, and weapons, and a Cavalier drum, saddle, and hat, the latter with its leather travelling case, which is probably unique. There is a gorgeous coloured pedigree to the first Sir Thomas Myddelton, recording ancestors centuries before, though perhaps not quite so far back as the pedigree in the long gallery at Hatfield, which is said to go back to Adam.

The servants' hall is a delightful old room, with long black oak tables and settles, those against the wall being fixtures to the panelling. There is a raised daïs, and a seat of state to make distinction at the board. There are queer old portraits of ancient retainers, one the bellman who used to ring the great bell in the corner turret of the quadrangle, and another very jolly looking porter, who has his eye on an antique beer barrel perched on wheels in a corner of the room. This apparatus has done good service in its day, as have the great pewter dishes and copper jugs. Above the wide open fireplace are the Myddelton arms. The servants' hall was an orderly apartment:

> "No noise nor strife nor swear at all,
> But all be decent in the Hall,"

is written up for everybody to see, with the following rules:—That every servant must take off his hat at entering; and sit in his proper place, and drink in his turn, and refrain from telling tales or speaking disrespectfully, and various other things, which misdeeds were to be punished in the first instance by the offender being deprived of his allowance of beer; for the second offence, three days' beer; and the third, a week.

The castle is rich in portraits, especially by Lely and Kneller, many of which hang in the oak

SERVANTS' HALL, CHIRK CASTLE.

gallery, which extends the whole length of the eastern wing; and there are several fine oak cabinets, one of which, of ebony and tortoise-shell with silver chasings, was given to the third Sir Thomas Myddelton by the Merry Monarch.

The wrought-iron entrance gates of very elaborate workmanship were made in 1719 by the local blacksmith.

At the ancient seat of the Trevors, Brynkinalt, nearer to Chirk village, are some interesting portraits of the Stuart period, notably of Charles II.; James, Duke of York; Nell Gwyn, the Duchess of Portsmouth, and Barbara Villiers.

Chirk village is insignificant, but has a fine church in which are some interesting monuments, notably that of the gallant knight who besieged his own castle as before described. He and his second wife are represented in marble busts. It was their son Charles who married the famous beauty of Charles II.'s reign; she was the daughter of Sir Robert Needham, and her younger sister, Eleanor, became the Duke of Monmouth's mistress. There is an old brick mansion called Plâs Baddy, near Ruabon, where "La Belle Myddelton" and her husband lived when the diversions of the Court proved tedious; but buried in these wilds, she must have felt sadly out of her element without the large following of admirers at her feet. She had more brains, though, than

most Court beauties, and being a talented artist, was not entirely dependent upon flattery.

Near the entrance of the Ceiriog valley, to the west of Chirk, is a farm called Pontfaen, and beyond, across some meadows, there is a remarkable Druidical circle. Gigantic stones are riveted to the crosspieces of archways, having the appearance of balancing themselves in a most remarkable manner. The entrance to the circle has two pillars in which are holes through which was passed a pole to act as wicket; and in front of the altar is a rock in which may be seen cavities for the feet, where the officiating priest is supposed to have stood. It is secluded, solemn, and ghostly, especially by moonlight when we saw it for the first time. The villages hereabouts, though picturesquely situated, are far from interesting: whitewashed and red-brick cottages of a very plain and ordinary type, and very few ancient buildings.

Some of the most picturesque old houses in England are to be found in the southern and central part of Salop. Take, for example, Stokesay Castle, which is quite unique. A battlemented Early English tower with lancet windows and the great hall are the principal remains. The latter, entered from above by a primitive wooden staircase, is a noble apartment with a fine open timber roof. The exterior has been altered and added

to at a later period, making a very quaint group of gables, with a projecting storey of half-timber of the sixteenth century. This is lighted by lattice windows, and the bay or projection is held by timber supports from the earlier masonry. It has a deep roof, and the whole effect is odd and un-English. Not the least interesting feature is an Elizabethan timber gatehouse with carved barge-boards, entrance gate, and corner brackets, and the timbers shaped in diamonds and other devices. Then there is picturesque Pitchford Hall and Condover close by: the former a fine half-timber mansion, the latter a stately Elizabethan pile of stone. Pitchford we believe has been very much burnished up and considerably enlarged since we were there, but we should not like to see it with its new embellishments, for from our recollection of the old house, half its charm was owing to the fact that there was nothing modern-antique about it: a dear old black-and-white homestead, which looked too perfect a picture for the restorer to set to work upon it and spoil its poetry; but for all that it may be improved. The courtyard presents quite a dazzling arrangement of geometric patterns in the timber work, and over the central porch there is a quaint Elizabethan gable of wood quite unlike anything we have seen before. The side facing the north is, or was, quite a picture for the artist's brush. The stately lofty gables of Condover are

in striking contrast with the more homely looking ones of Pitchford; and the builder was an important person in his day, as may be judged from his elaborate effigy in Westminster Abbey, namely, Judge Owen, who claimed descent from one of the ancient Welsh kings. Like most Elizabethan houses, Condover Hall is built in the form of a letter E, but the central compartment was probably added to later on by Inigo Jones. The doorway and bay-windows above are of fine proportions, and full of dignity.

At Eaton Constantine, to the east, is the quaint old timber house where Richard Baxter lived; and at Langley, to the south-east, a fine old timber gatehouse; as well as Plash Hall, famous for its elaborate twisted chimneys. Then there is Ludlow with its ruined castle, where poor young Edward v. was proclaimed king before he set out for London: and its famous "Feathers" hostelry with black-oak panelled rooms, its old town-gate, and the ancient bridge of Ludford to the south. The country between Ludlow and Shrewsbury is remarkably beautiful, especially in the vicinity of Church Stretton, which of recent years has grown rapidly as a health resort, meaning, of course, the springing up of modern dwellings to mar its old-world snugness.

There is, or was some twenty years ago, a narrow street of old houses, behind which, backed

by beautiful woods, stood the manor-house, long since converted into an inn, and the church. Beyond the woods rise a range of lofty hills; and if we take the trouble to clamber up to the highest peak (which rises to upwards of 1600 feet), we are well rewarded for our pains. Two of the highest points are Caradoc and Lawley, famous landmarks for miles around. The "Raven," when we visited it, was a quaint old hostelry, and an ideal place to make headquarters for exploring the romantic scenery all around.

At the pretty little village of Winnington, close upon the county border, and fourteen miles as the crow flies to the north-west of Church Stretton, stands a tiny little cottage at the foot of the Briedden Hills. Here lived the famous old Parr, who was born there in the reign of Edward IV. and died in that of Charles I., having lived in the reigns of no less than ten monarchs. In his hundred and fifty-second year he went to London for change of air, which unfortunately proved fatal. His grave-stone in Westminster Abbey will be remembered near Saint-Evremond's and Chiffinch's, near the Poets' Corner.

The quiet little town of Market Drayton, some eighteen miles to the north-east of Shrewsbury, contains many interesting timber houses. There is still an old-fashioned air about the place of which the footsore pedestrian stumbling over the

cobble stones soon becomes conscious. The quaint overhanging gables in the narrow streets are rich with ornamental carvings. One long range of buildings at the corner of Shropshire and Cheshire Streets is a fine specimen of "magpie" architecture. Let us hope the row of antiquated shops on the basement will remain content with their limited space; for so far those imposing modern structures, which have a way of throwing everything out of harmony, are conspicuous by their absence. Nor has the demon electric tram come to destroy this quiet peaceful corner of Salop, as, alas! it has to so many of our old towns. One dreads to think what England will be like in another fifty years. Farther along Shropshire Street we find a little antiquated inn, the "Dun Cow," with great timber beams and thick thatch roof, and the "King's Arms" opposite bearing the date 1674 upon the gable abutting upon the roof, which does not say much for the sobriety of the person who set it up. Hard by is a good Queen Anne house standing a little back, as if it didn't like to associate with such neighbours. It looked deserted, and was "To Let"; and we couldn't help thinking how this compact little house would be picked up were it only situated in Kensington or Hampstead.

The church, an imposing building finely situated, is disappointing, though there is some good

MARKET DRAYTON.

MARKET DRAYTON.

Norman work about it. It has been reseated, and the only thing worth noting is an old tomb showing the quaint female costume of Elizabeth's day, and a tall-backed oak settle facing the communion table. The latter looks as if it ought to be facing an open fireplace in some manorial farm.

Many superstitions linger hereabouts. The old people can recollect the dread in which a certain road was held at night for fear of a ghostly lady, who had an unpleasant way of jumping upon the backs of the farmers as they returned from market. Tradition does not record whether those who were thus favoured were total abstainers; possibly not, for the lady by all accounts had a grudge against those who occasionally took a glass; and in a certain inn cellar, when jugs had to be replenished, it was discomforting to find her seated on the particular barrel required, like the goblin seen by Gabriel Grub upon the tombstone.

There was a custom among the old Draytonites for some reason, not to permit their aged to die on a feather-bed. It was believed to make them die hard, and so *in extremis* it was dragged from beneath the unfortunate person. The sovereign remedy they had for whooping-cough is worth remembering, as it is so simple. All you have to do is to cut some hair from the

nape of the invalid child's neck, place it between a piece of bread and butter, and hand the sandwich to a dog. If he devours it the malady is cured; if he doesn't, well, the life of the dog at least is spared.

A few miles to the east of the town, in the adjoining county, is the famous battlefield of Blore-heath, where the Houses of Lancaster and York fought desperately in 1459. The latter under the Earl of Salisbury came off victorious, while the commander of Henry's forces was slain. A stone pedestal marks the spot, originally distinguished by a wooden cross, where Lord Audley fell.

Of less historical moment but more romantic interest, is the fact that here close upon a couple of centuries later the diamond George of Charles II. was concealed, while its royal wearer by right was lurking fifteen miles away at Boscobel. The gallant Colonel Blague, who had had the charge of this tell-tale treasure, was captured and thrown into the Tower, where no less a celebrity than peaceful Isaak Walton managed to smuggle it. Blague eventually escaped, and so the George found its way to the king in France. At Blore also Buckingham remained concealed, disguised as a labourer, before he got away into Leicester-shire and thence to London and the coast. "Buckingham's hole," the cave where his grace was hidden, is still pointed out; and a very aged

man who lived in the neighbourhood a few years ago prided himself that he could show the exact place where the duke fell and broke his arm; and he ought to have known, as his great-grandfather was personally acquainted with "old Elias Bradshaw," who was present when the accident happened.

Broughton Hall, a fine old Jacobean mansion, stands to the east of Blore. It is a gloomy house, and has some ghostly traditions. We are reminded of the rather startling fact that upon developing a negative of the fine oak staircase there, the transparent figure of an old woman in a mob-cap stood in the foreground! Here was proof positive for the Psychological Society. But, alas! careful investigation upset the mystery. The shadowy outline proved to be painfully like the ancient housekeeper. The subject had required a long exposure, and the lady must have wished to be immortalised, for she certainly must have stood in front of the lens for at least a minute or so. It is strange this desire to be pictured. Any amateur photographer must have experienced the difficulties to be encountered in a village street. The hours of twelve and four are fatal. School children in thousands will crop up to fill up the foreground. In such a predicament a friend of ours was inspired with an ingenious remedy. Having covered his

head with the black cloth, he was horrified to see a myriad of faces instead of the subject he wished to take. However, he got his focus adjusted somehow, and having placed his dark slide in position ready for exposure, he placed the cloth over the lens-end of the camera as if focussing in the opposite direction. Immediately there was a stampede for the other side, with considerable struggling as to who should be foremost. The cherished little bit of village architecture was now free, the cloth whipped away, and the exposure given. "Are we all taken in, mister?" asked one of the boys a little suspiciously. "Yes, my lads," was the response given, "you've all been taken in." And so they had, but went home rejoicing.

Beside the staircase, there is little of interest inside Broughton. There was a hiding-place once in one of the rooms which was screened by an old oil painting, but it is now merged into tradition. The road from Newport passes through wild and romantic scenery. At Croxton, farther to the east, there is, or was, a Maypole, one of those old-world villages where ancient customs die hard. Swinnerton Hall, a fine Queen Anne house to the north-east, and nearer to Stone, is the seat of the ancient family of Fitzherbert, the beautiful widow of one of whose members was in 1785 married to the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV.

The palatial Hall of Trentham, farther to the north, is rather beyond our province, being in the main modern. One grieves that the fine old house represented in Dr. Plot's quaint history of the county has passed away; one grieves, indeed, that so many of these fine Staffordshire houses are no more. The irreparable loss of Ingestre Hall, Wrothesley Hall, Enville Hall, and of Severn End in the adjoining county, makes one shudder at the dangers of fire in these ancestral mansions. Coombe Abbey in Warwickshire was only quite recently saved from a like fate by Lord Craven's activity and presence of mind.

But the old gatehouse of Tixall to the east of Stafford, and Wootton Lodge to the north of Uttoxeter, fortunately still remain intact. The former presents much the same appearance as in Plot's drawing of 1686, but the curious gabled timber mansion beyond has long since disappeared, and the classic building that occupies its site looks hardly in keeping with so perfect an example of Elizabethan architecture. The romantic situation of Wootton Lodge is well described by Howitt. The majestic early-Jacobean mansion (the work of Inigo Jones) has a compactness and dignity quite its own, and there is nothing like it anywhere in England, though more classic, perhaps, than the majority of houses of its period. It has a battlemented roof surmounted by an

array of massive chimneys, mullioned windows innumerable, and a graceful flight of steps leading to the ornamental porch. It was not at this stately house that the eccentric Jean Jacques came to bury himself for over a year, but at the Hall, a far less picturesque building. The philosopher and his companion Thérèsa le Vasseur were looked at askance by the country folk; and "old Ross Hall," as they called him, botanising in the secluded lanes in his strange striped robe and grotesque velvet cap with gold tassels and pendant, was a holy terror to the children. It was supposed he was in search of "lost spirits," as indeed was the case, for his melancholia at length led to his departure under the suspicion that there was a plot to poison him.

A bee-line drawn across Staffordshire, say from Bridgnorth in Salop to Haddon in Derbyshire, would intersect some of the most interesting spots. In addition to Wootton and Ingestre, we have Throwley Hall, Croxden and Calwich Abbeys, and Tissington (in Derbyshire) to the north-east (not to mention Alton and Ilam), and Boscobel, Whiteladies, Tong, etc., to the south-east.

Of Boscobel and Whiteladies we have dealt with elsewhere too particularly to call for any fresh description here; but not so with the picturesque village of Tong, whose church is

certainly the most interesting example of early-Perpendicular architecture in the county. Would that the interiors of our old churches were as carefully preserved as is the case here. There is nothing modern and out of harmony. The rich oak carvings of the screens and choir stalls; the monumental effigies of the Pembrugges, Pierrepoints, Vernons, and Stanleys; the Golden Chapel, or Vernon chantry—all recall nooks and corners in Westminster Abbey. It was Sir Edward Stanley, whose recumbent effigy in plate armour is conspicuous, who married Margaret Vernon, the sister of the runaway heiress of Haddon, and thus inherited Tong Castle, as his brother-in-law did the famous Derbyshire estate.

The early-Tudor castle was demolished in the eighteenth century, when the present Strawberry-Hill Gothic fortress of reddish-coloured stone was erected by a descendant of the Richard Durant whose initials may still be seen on the old house in the Corn Market at Worcester, where Charles II. lodged before the disastrous battle.[1] Unromantic as were Georgian squires, as a rule, the Eastern Gothic architecture of their houses and the fantastic and unnatural grottoes in their grounds show signs of sentimental hankering. At Tong they went one better, for there are traditions of Æolian harps

[1] See *Flight of the King.*

set in the masonry of the farmyard of the castle. The mystic music must indeed have been thrown unto the winds!

But the Moorish-looking mansion, if architecturally somewhat a monstrosity, is nevertheless picturesque, with its domed roofs and pinnacles. A fine collection of pictures was dispersed in 1870, including an interesting portrait of Nell Gwyn, and of Charles I., which has been engraved.

In the older building (which somewhat resembled old Hendlip Hall) was born the famous seventeenth-century beauty, Lady Venetia Digby, *née* Stanley, of whom Vandyck has left us many portraits, notably the one at Windsor Castle,—an allegorical picture representing the triumph of innocence over calumny, for she certainly was a lady with "a past." The learned and eccentric Sir Kenelm Digby, her husband, endeavoured to preserve her charms by administering curious mixtures, such as viper wine; and this, though it was very well meant, probably ended her career before she was thirty-three. One can scarcely be surprised that at the post-mortem examination they discovered but very little brains; but this her husband attributed to his viper wine getting into her head!

Not far from Tong, in a secluded lane, is a tiny cottage called Hobbal Grange, which is associated with the wanderings of Charles II. when a fugitive

BLACKLADIES.

from Worcester. Here lived the mother of the loyal Penderel brothers, who risked their lives in harbouring their illustrious guest. We mention Hobbal more particularly as since the *Flight of the King* was written we have had it pointed out pretty conclusively that "the Grange" of to-day is only a small portion of the original "Grange Farm" converted into a labourer's dwelling. The greater part of the original house was pulled down in the eighteenth century. In an old plan, dated 1739, of which we have a tracing before us, there are no less than seven buildings comprising the farm, which was the largest on the Tong estate. In 1855 it was reduced to eighty-six acres. In 1716, Richard Penderel's grandson, John Rogers, was still in residence at Hobbal.

Near Whiteladies is the rival establishment Blackladies, a picturesque red-brick house with step-gables and mullioned bays. As the name implies, this also was a nunnery, but there are but scanty remains of the original building. There is a stone cross, and some other fragments are built into the masonry; and in the stables may be seen the chapel, where services were held until sixty years ago. Part of the moat also remains. A lane near at hand is still known as "Spirit Lane," because the Black Nuns of centuries ago have been seen to walk there.

IN NORTHERN DERBYSHIRE

OUR first impression of romantic Derbyshire vividly recalled one of the opening chapters of *Adam Bede*. Having secured lodgings at a pretty village not many miles from Haddon, we were somewhat disturbed with nocturnal hammerings issuing from an adjacent wheelwright's. Somebody had had the misfortune to fall into the river and was drowned, so we learned in the morning, and the rest we could guess. Somewhat depressed, we were on the point of sallying forth when the local policeman arrived and demanded our presence at the inquest, as one of the jurymen had failed to put in an appearance. A cheerful beginning to a holiday!

There is something about dear old Haddon Hall that makes it quite unique, and few ancient baronial dwellings are so rich in the poetry of association. In the first place, though a show house, one is not admitted by one door and ejected from another with a jumbled idea of what we have seen and an undigested store of historical information. One forgets it is a show

place at all. It is more like the enchanted castle of the fairy story, where the occupants have been asleep for centuries; and in passing through the grand old rooms one would scarcely be surprised to encounter people in mediæval costume, or knights in clanking armour. The lovers of historical romance for once will find pictures of their imagination realised. They can fit in favourite scenes and characters with no fear of stumbling across modern "improvements" to destroy the illusion and bring them back to the twentieth century. Compare the time-worn grey old walls of this baronial house with those of Windsor Castle, and one will see the havoc that has been done to the latter by centuries of restoration. Events that have happened at Haddon appear to us real; but at Windsor, so full of historic memories, there is but little to assist the imagination.

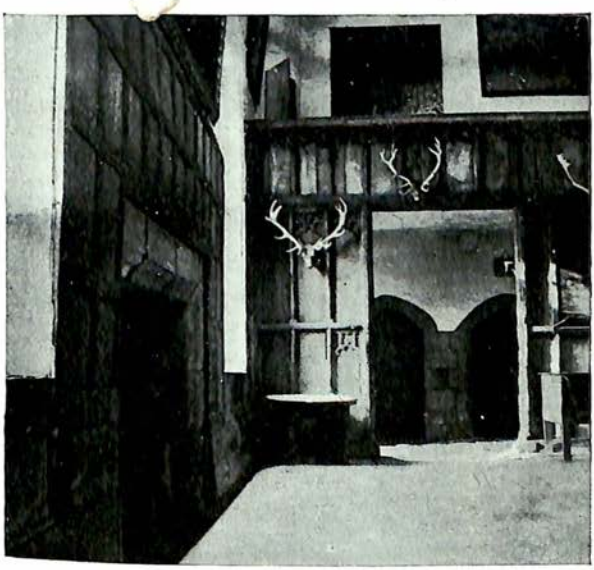
The picturesqueness of Haddon is enhanced by its lack of uniformity. The rooms and courtyards and gardens are all on different levels, and we are continually climbing up or down stairs. The first ascent to the great entrance gate is precipitous, and some of the stone steps are almost worn away with use. Entering the first courtyard (there are two, with buildings around each) there is another ascent, with a quaint external staircase beyond, leading to the State

apartments, and to the left again there are steps by which the entrance of the banqueting-hall is reached.

Opposite is the chapel, with its panelled, balustraded pews and two-decker Jacobean pulpit, which is very picturesque; and the second courtyard beyond, to the south of which is the Long Gallery or ball-room, with bay-windows looking upon the upper garden, from which ascend those well-known and much photographed balustraded stone steps to the shaded terrace-walk and winter garden, above which, and approached by another flight of steps, is Dorothy Vernon's Walk, a romantic avenue of lime and sycamore. Facing the steps and screened by a great yew tree is yet another flight, with ball-surmounted pillars, leading to the "Lord's Parlour," or Orange Parlour as it was formerly called; and from this picturesque exit the Haddon heiress eloped with the gallant John Manners, and by so doing brought the noble estate into the possession of the Dukes of Rutland.

An elaborately carved Elizabethan doorway leads here from the ball-room, which is rich in carved oak panelling and has a coved ceiling bearing the arms and crest of the Manners and Vernons. By repute, all the woodwork, including the circular oak steps leading to the apartment, was cut from a single tree in the park. The

GREAT HALL, HADDON.



GREAT HALL, HADDON.

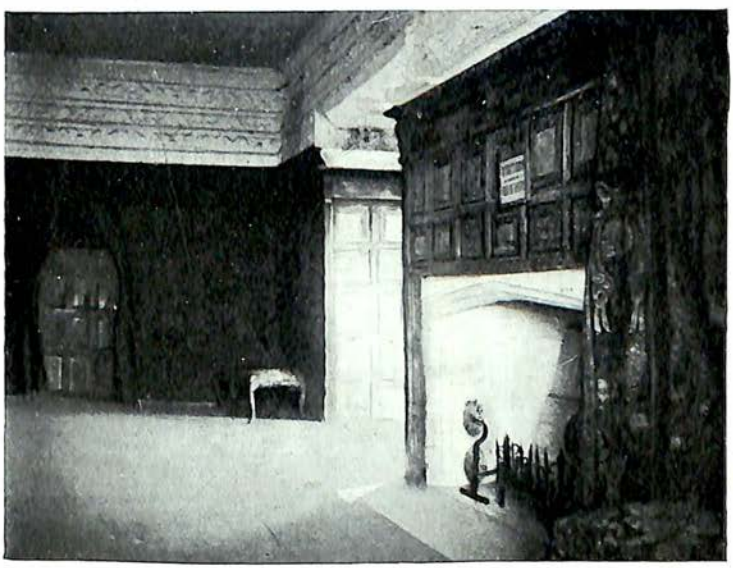
ash-grey colour of the wood is caused by a light coat of distemper, which it has been surmised was added at some time to give it the appearance of cedar. Not many years ago there was a controversy upon this subject, which resulted in some ill-advised person obtaining leave to anoint a portion of the panelling with boiled oil. The result was disastrous, and led to an indignant outcry from artists and architects; but fortunately the act of vandalism was stopped in time, and the muddy substance removed. The wainscoting consists of a series of semicircular arches divided by fluted and ornamental pillars of different heights and sizes, the smaller panels being surmounted by the shields of arms and crests of the ancient owners of the Hall, above which is a bold turreted and battlemented cornice.

The old banqueting-hall is rather cosier looking than the famous hall of Penshurst. The narrow, long oak table with its rustic settle is somewhat similar, but later in character than those at Penshurst, and has a grotesque arrangement of projecting feet. The hall is all nooks and corners. Below a projecting gallery is a recess for the wide well-staircase, with its little gates to keep the dogs downstairs, and a lattice-paned window lighting up the uneven lines of the floor. The walls are panelled, and there is a wide open fireplace, and the screen has Gothic

carvings. Attached to the framework is an iron bracelet, to enforce the duty of a man drinking his due portion in the good old days. The penalty was before him, so should he fail, he knew his lot, namely, to have the contents of the capacious black jack emptied down his sleeve. The withdrawing-room to the south of the hall is richly wainscoted in carved oak, with a recessed window containing a fixed settle and a step leading down to a genuine cosy-corner. There are some who believe our ancestors had no idea of comfort; but picture this fine old room in the winter, with blazing logs upon the fantastic fire-dogs, the warm red light playing upon the various armorial carvings of the frieze, and the quaint little oriel window half-cast in shadow. The apartment immediately above has a still more elaborate frieze of ornamental plaster above the rich tapestry hangings, and the bay-window in the wainscoted recess, like that beneath, looks upon the gardens, with the graceful terrace on the left and the winding Wye and venerable bridge below. The circular brass fire-dogs are remarkable.[1] The "Earl's Bedchamber" and "Dressing-Room" and the "Lady's Dressing-Room" have tapestried walls and snug recessed windows. The "State Bedroom" was formerly

[1] They have been reproduced most carefully for the drawing-room of the Cedar House at Hillingdon.

COURTYARD, HADDON.



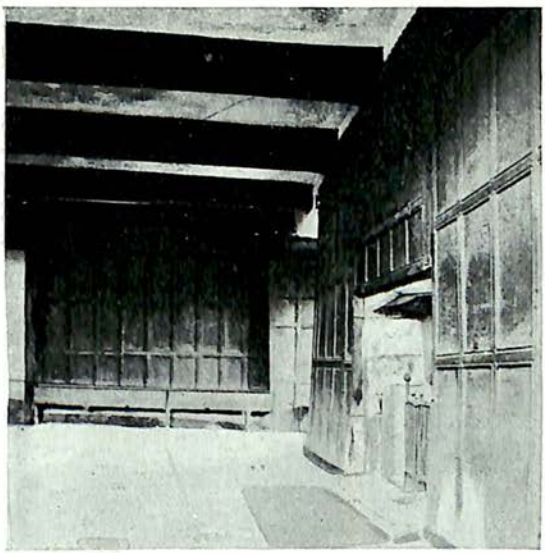
DRAWING-ROOM, HADDON.

the "Blue Drawing-room." This also is hung with tapestry, and the recessed window has a heavy ornamental frieze above. Near the lofty plumed bedstead, with green silk-velvet hangings, is a queer old cradle, which formerly was in the chaplain's room on the right-hand side of the entrance gate. But to describe the numerous rooms in detail would be tedious. Everything is on a huge and ponderous scale in the kitchens and offices; one is almost reminded of the giant's kitchen in the pantomime. Among the curious and obsolete instruments one encounters here and there, there is a wooden instrument like a colossal boot-jack for stringing bows. It stands against the wall as if it were in daily use. Though there is some good old furniture, one would wish to see the rooms less bare. But let us turn to the famous Belvoir manuscripts, which not so very long ago were discovered much rat-eaten in a loft of that historic seat of the Earls of Rutland. It is interesting after a visit to Haddon to dip into these papers and get some idea of what the old Hall was like in its most flourishing days. The great bare ballroom must have looked very grand in the days of Charles I., with the coved ceiling brilliant with paint and gilt. In addition to a "gilded organ," were two "harpsicalls" and a "viall chest with a bandora and vialls; a shovel-board table on tressels; a large looking-glass

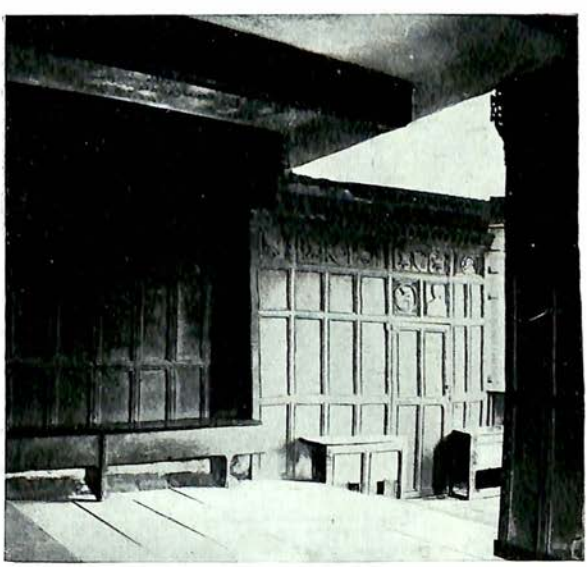
of seventy-two glasses, and four pictures of shepherds and shepherdesses." Sixteen suits of armour adorned the screen of the great hall. The massive oaken tables and cabinets displayed a wealth of silver and gilt plate, including a "greate quilte doble sault with a peacock" (the crest of the Manners) "on the top"; silver basins, ewers, and drinking bowls; a warming-pan, two little boats; four porringers with spoons for the children, a "maudlin" cup and cover, etc.

Among the rooms were the "Green Chamber," the "Rose Chamber," the "Great Chamber," the "Best Lodging," the "Hunters' Chamber," the "School-house Chamber," the "Nursery," the "Smoothing Chamber," the "Partridge Chamber," "Windsor," the "Little Gallery," etc. "The uppermost chamber in the nether tower" is almost suggestive of something gruesome, while "my mistress's sweetmeat closet" sounds tempting; and a list of contents included things to make the juvenile palate water—"Glasses of apricots, marmalett, and currants, cherry marmalett, dried pears and plums and apricots, preserved and grated oranges, raspberry and currant cakes, conserved roses, syrup of violets," etc. These things perhaps are trivial, but there is a domesticity about them by which we may think of Haddon as a country home as well as a historic building.

Haddon ceased to be a residence of the Dukes



WITHDRAWING ROOM, HADDON.



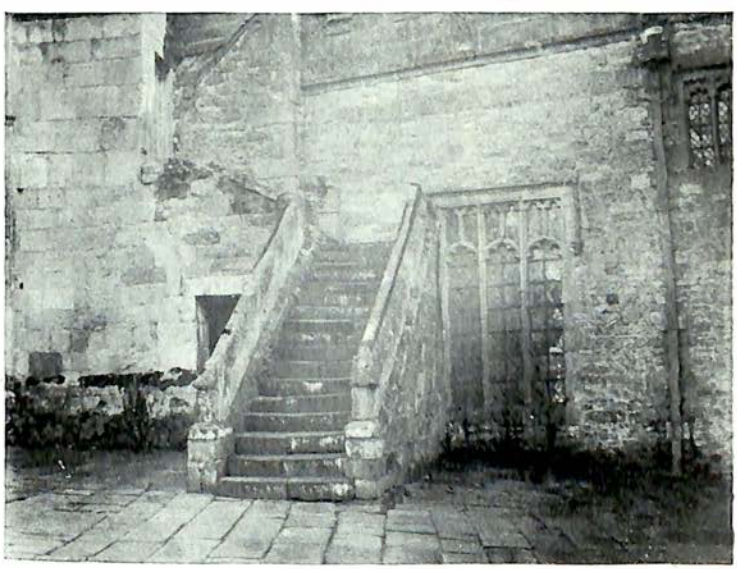
WITHDRAWING ROOM, HADDON.

of Rutland more than a century ago. In the days of the Merry Monarch the ninth earl kept open house in a very lavish style. It is said the servants alone amounted to one hundred and forty; and capacious as are the ancient walls, it is a marvel how they all were housed. The romantic Dorothy, who a century before ran away upon the evening of a great ball, was the daughter of the "King of the Peak," Sir George Vernon, thus nicknamed for his lordly and open-handed way of living. She died in 1584, and Sir George Manners, the eldest of her four children, sided with the Parliament during the Civil Wars. But his mode of living was by no means puritanical, and Haddon was kept up in its traditional lavish style. In Bakewell church there is a fine marble tomb representing him and his wife and children, as well as the tomb of the famous Dorothy and her husband, Sir John Manners. The family crest, a Peacock in his pride, that is, with his tail displayed, so conspicuous with the Vernon boar's head in the panelling and parqueting of Haddon, gives its name to the most delightful of ancient hostelries at Rowsley. The proximity of the mansion must have made its fortune over and over again, apart from its piscatorial attractions. The gable ends and latticed windows, and the ivy-grown battlemented porch and trim gardens, are irresistible, and no one could wish for

quarters more in harmony with the old baronial Hall.

In striking contrast to the sturdy ruggedness of hoary Haddon is princely Chatsworth. The comparison may be likened to that between a mediæval knight and a gorgeous cavalier. The art treasures and sumptuous magnificence of Chatsworth, the elaborate and graceful carvings (which by the way are not nearly all by the hand of Gibbons, but by a local man named Samuel Watson), and the beauty of the gardens, make it rightly named the "Palace of the Peak." But it is its association with the luckless Mary Queen of Scots which adds romantic interest to the mansion, —not that the existing classical structure can claim that honour, for nothing now remains of the older building, a battlemented Tudor structure with an entrance like the gatehouse of Kenilworth Castle, and a "gazebo" on either side of the western front. It is odd, however, that Lord Burleigh should have selected it as "a mete house for good preservation" of a prisoner "having no toure of resort wher any ambushes might lye," for there were no less than eight towers, but presumably not the kind the Lord High Treasurer meant. During her twelve years' captivity in Sheffield (where, by the way, "Queen Mary's Chamber," with its curious heraldic ceiling, may still be seen in the manor-house), she was fre-

DOORWAY, HADDON.



INTERIOR COURTYARD, HADDON.

quently at Chatsworth and Wingfield Manor under the guardianship of George Talbot, sixth Earl of Shrewsbury, the fourth husband of that remarkable woman, Bess of Hardwick, who was not a little jealous of her husband's fascinating captive, and circulated various scandalous stories, about which the Earl thought fit to justify himself in his own epitaph in St. Peter's church, Sheffield. When the important prisoner was under his custody in that town, she was not permitted to go beyond the courtyard, and usually took her exercise upon the leads. But at Chatsworth her surveillance was less strict, although truly John Beaton, the master of her household (who predeceased his mistress, and was buried at Edensor close by, where a brass to his memory remains), had strict instructions regarding her. Her attendants, thirty-nine in all, were none of them allowed to go beyond the precincts of the grounds without special permission, nor was anybody allowed to wait upon the queen between nine o'clock at night and six in the morning. None were sanctioned to carry arms; and when the fair prisoner wished to take the air, Lord Shrewsbury had to be informed an hour beforehand, that he and his staff might be upon the alert. One can picture Mary and her maids of honour engaged in needlework upon the picturesque moated and balustraded stone "Bower" near the river, with

guards around ever on the watch. This and the old Hunting-tower high up among the trees, a massive structure with round Elizabethan towers, are the only remains to take us back to the days of the Scots queen's captivity.

To see Chatsworth to perfection it should be visited when the wooded heights in the background are rich in their autumnal colouring. The approach from Beeley village through the park and along the bank of the Derwent at this season of the year, and the view from the house and avenues of the river and park, are particularly beautiful. The elaborate waterworks recall the days of the grand monarque, and an *al fresco* shower-bath may be enjoyed beneath a copper willow tree, the kind of practical joke that was popular in the old Spring Gardens in London in Charles II.'s time. In addition to the splendid paintings, are numerous sketches by Raphael, Michael Angelo, Titian, etc., which came from the famous forty days' sale of 1682, when the works collected by Sir Peter Lely were dispersed.

Of the stately mansions erected by Bess of Hardwick, the building Countess of Shrewsbury, —Chatsworth, Oldcotes, Hardwick, Bolsover, and Worksop,—Hardwick is the most untouched and perfect. The last remaining bit of the older Chatsworth House was removed just a century after Bess's death, so the present building

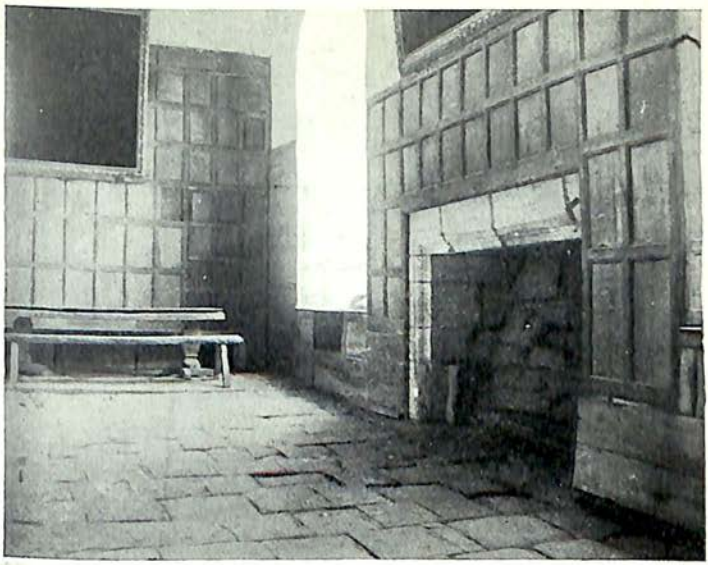
must not be associated with her name, nor indeed can any rooms at Hardwick have been occupied by Mary Queen of Scots, as is sometimes stated, for the house was not begun until after her death. If the queen was ever at Hardwick, it was in the older mansion, of which very considerable ruins remain. The error, of course, arises from one of the rooms at Hardwick being named "Mary Queen of Scots' room," which contains the bed and furniture from the room she occupied at Chatsworth; and the velvet hangings of the bed bearing her monogram, and the rich coverlet, are indeed in her own needle-work.

Bess of Hardwick in many respects was like her namesake the strong-minded queen; and when her fourth better-half had gained his experience and sought sympathy from the Bishop of Lichfield, he received the following consoling reply: "Some will say in yo^{r} L. behalfe tho' the Countesse is a sharpe and bitter shrewe, and, therefore, licke enough to shorten y^{r} life, if shee shulde kepe you company. Indede, my good Lo. I have heard some say so; but if shrewdnesse or sharpnesse may be a just cause of sep[ar]acon betweene a man and wiefe, I thinke fewe men in Englande woulde keepe their wiefes longe; for it is a common jeste, yet treue in some sense, that there is but one shrewe in all the worlde, and evy man hathe her; and so evy man might be rydd of

his wife, that wolde be rydd of a shrewe." But with all her faults the existence of Hardwick and Bolsover alone will cover a multitude of sins. A fortune-teller predicted that so long as she kept building she would never die; and had not the severity of the winter of 1607 thrown her masons out of employment, her ladyship might have survived to show us what she could do with the vacant space at Aldwych.

There is something peculiarly majestic and stately about Hardwick Hall. It is one mass of lofty windows. It is rarely occupied as a dwelling, and one would like to see it lighted up like Chatsworth at Christmas time. But with the setting sun shining on the windows it looks a blaze of light—a huge beacon in the distance. With the exception of the ornamental stone parapet of the roofs, in which Bess' initials "E.S." stand out conspicuously, the mansion is all horizontal and perpendicular lines; but the regularity is relieved by the broken outline of the garden walls, with their picturesque array of tall halberd-like pinnacles.

Like Knole and Ham House, the interior is untouched, and every room is in the same condition since the time of its erection. Some of the wonderful old furniture came from the older Chatsworth House, including, as before stated, the bedroom furniture of Mary Queen of Scots.



GREAT HALL, HADDON.

HARDWICK HALL.

Nowhere in England may be seen finer tapestries than at Hardwick; they give a wealth of colour to the interior, and in the Presence-chamber the parget-work in high relief is also richly coloured. Here is Queen Elizabeth's State chair overhung by a canopy, and the Royal arms and supporters are depicted on the pargeting. The tapestries lining the walls of the grand stone staircase are superb, and the silk needlework tapestry in some of the smaller rooms a feast of colour. Everywhere are the grandest old cushioned chairs and settees, and inlaid cabinets and tables. The picture-gallery extends the entire length of the house, and abounds in historical portraits, including Bess of Hardwick dressed in black, perhaps for one of her many husbands, with a black head-dress, large ruff, and chain of pearls. Here also is a full-length portrait of her rival, the luckless queen, very sad and very pale, painted, during her nineteen years of captivity, at Sheffield in 1678, and a portrait of her little son James at the age of eight,—a picture sent to comfort the poor mother in her seclusion. The future king's cold indifference to his mother's fate was not the least unpleasant trait of his selfish character. In a discourse between Sir John Harrington and the monarch, the latter did his best to avoid any reference to the poor queen's fate; but he might have saved himself the trouble, for he was more affected by the superstitious

omens preceding her execution. His Highness, he says, "told me her death was visible in Scotland before it did really happen, being, as he said, spoken of in secret by those whose power of sight presented to them a bloody head dancing in the air." From James we may turn to little Lady Arabella Stuart in a white gown, nursing a doll in still more antiquated costume, in blissful ignorance of her unhappy future. She was the granddaughter of Bess of Hardwick, and was born at Chatsworth close upon the time when the Queen of Scots was there. Looking at these two portraits of this baby and the boy, it is difficult to imagine that the latter should have sent his younger cousin to linger away her life and lose her reason in the Tower from the fact that she had the misfortune to be born a Stuart.

Horace Walpole in speaking of this room says: "Here and in all the great mansions of that age is a gallery remarkable only for its extent." But it is remarkable for its two huge fireplaces of black marble and alabaster, for its fine moulded plaster ceiling, for its fifteenth-century tapestry, and quaint Elizabethan easy-chairs. The great hall is a typical one of the period, with open screen and balustraded gallery, a flat ceiling, big open fireplace, and walls embellished with antlers and ancient pieces of armour. When the mansion was completed in 1597 the older one was discarded

and the furniture removed, and the walls were gradually allowed to fall into ruin. It is now but a shell; but one may get a good idea of the style of building and extent, as well as of the internal decorations. It appears to be of Tudor date, almost Elizabethan in character, and over the wide fireplaces are colossal figures in bold relief, emblematic, perhaps, of the giant energy of Bess of Hardwick, who spent the greater part of her lifetime in those old rooms. Tradition says she died immensely rich, but without a friend. She survived her fourth husband seventeen years and was interred in the church of All-Saints', Derby, where the mural monument of her recumbent effigy had been erected under her own superintendence.

To the south-west of Hardwick, and midway between Derby and Sheffield, are the ruinous remains of another old residence of Lord Shrewsbury's, associated with the captivity of Mary Queen of Scots. This is South Wingfield manor-house, whither she was removed from Tutbury Castle prior to her first sojourn at Chatsworth, and whence she was removed back to Tutbury in 1585. By this time Shrewsbury had freed himself of the responsible custodianship: a thankless and trying office, for Elizabeth was ever suspicious that he erred on the side of leniency. A letter addressed from Wingfield Manor, from Sir Ralph Sadleir

to John Manners, among the Belvoir manuscripts, and dated January 6, 1584–85, runs as follows: "The queenes majestie hath given me in chardge to remove the Queene of Scots from hence to Tutbury, and to the end she should be the better accompanyed and attended from thither, her highness hath commanded me to gyve warning to some of the gentlemen of best reputation in this contry to prepare themselfs to attend upon her at the time of her removing. I have thought good to signify the same unto you emonge others, and to require you on her Majesties behalf to take so much paine as to be heere at Wingfield upon wednesday the xiiith of this moneth at a convenient tyme before noone to attend upon the said queene the same day to Derby and the next day after to Tutbury." Of the State apartments occupied by her there are no remains beyond an external wall, but the battlemented tower with which they communicated, and from which the royal prisoner is said to have been in secret touch with her friends, is still tolerably perfect.

In the Civil War the brave old manor-house stood out stoutly for the Royalists, but at length was taken by Lord Grey. The governor, Colonel Dalby, was on the point of making his escape from the stables in disguise when he was recognised and shot. The stronghold shortly afterwards was dismantled, but in Charles II.'s

reign was patched up again and made a residence, and so it continued until little more than a century ago. The village of Ashover, midway between Wingfield and Chesterfield, is charmingly situated on the river Amber amidst most picturesque scenery. Here in 1660, says the parish register, a certain Dorothy Matly "forswore herself, whereupon the ground opened and she sank overhead!" There are some old tombs to the Babingtons, of which family was Anthony of Dethick-cum-Lea, nearer Matlock, where are slight remains of the old family seat incorporated in a farmhouse. As is well known, it was the seizure of the Queen of Scots' correspondence with this young desperado, who with Tichborne, Salisbury, and other associates was plotting Elizabeth's assassination, that hastened her tragic end at Fotheringay.

Bolsover Castle, which lies directly north of Hardwick, has a style of architecture peculiar to itself. It is massive, and grim, and prison-like, with a strange array of battlements and pinnacles; and Bess of Hardwick showed her genius in making it as different as possible from her other residences. And the interior is as fantastic and original as the exterior. Altogether there is something suggestive of the fairy-tale castle; and the main entrance, guarded by a giant overhead and bears on either side, has something ogre-like

about it. The rooms are vaulted and supported by pillars, some of them in imitation of the earlier castle of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They are a peculiar mixture of early-English and Renaissance, but the effect is very pleasing and picturesque. The main arches of the ceiling of the "Pillar parlour" are panelled and rest on Elizabethan vaulting-shafts, and the ribs are centred in heavy bosses. The semicircular intersections of the walls are wainscoted walnut wood, richly gilt and elaborately carved, and there are early-Jacobean hooded fireplaces and queer old painted and inlaid doors and window-shutters. The largest of these rooms is the "Star chamber," so called from the golden stars on the ceiling depicted on blue ground, representing the firmament. In these gorgeous rooms Charles I. was sumptuously entertained by the first Duke of Newcastle. In what is called the "Riding house," a roofless Jacobean ruin of fine proportions, Ben Jonson's masque, *Love's Welcome*, was performed before the king and queen. Clarendon speaks of the stupendous entertainment (that cost some fifteen thousand pounds) and excess of feasting, which, he says, "God be thanked!—no man ever after imitated." The duke (then marquis), who had been the king's tutor, was a playwriter of some repute, though Pepys does not speak highly of his ability, saying his works were

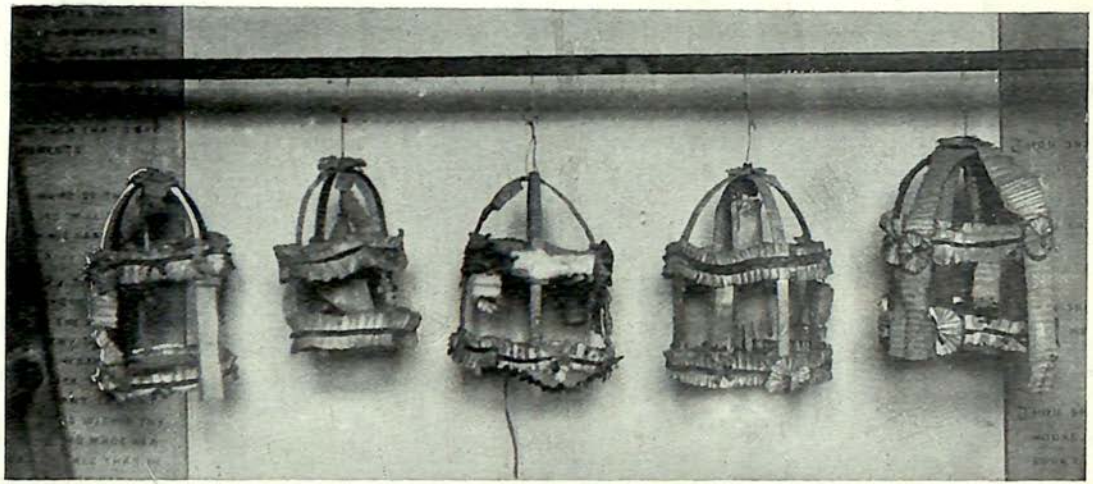
silly and tedious.[1] His eccentric wife had also literary inclinations, and wrote, among other things, a high-flown biography of her spouse, which the Diarist said showed her to be "a mad, conceited, ridiculous woman, and he an asse to suffer her to write what she writes to him and of him." This romantic and theatrical lady was one of the sights of London when she came to town in her extravagant and antiquated dress, and always had a large crowd around her. The practical joke played upon her at the ball at Whitehall, mentioned in de Gramont's *Memoirs*, is amusing, but commands our sympathy, and is a specimen of the bad taste of Society at the time.

The romantic situation of the castle, perched upon a steep promontory overlooking a dense mass of trees, must have been quite to the old duchess's taste; and one can picture her walking in state in the curious old gardens as she appears in her theatrical-looking portrait at Welbeck. According to local tradition there is a subterranean passage leading from the castle to the church, which was formerly entered by a secret staircase running from the servants' hall; and there are stories of a hidden chapel beneath the crypt, and ghosts in Elizabethan ruffles. The Cavendish Chapel in the church was erected by Bess of

[1] *Pepys' Diary*, March 18, 1667–68.

Hardwick's younger son, Sir Charles Cavendish, father of the first Duke of Newcastle, and contains his tomb, a gorgeous Jacobean monument.

Some of the remote villages in the wild and beautiful Peak district have strong faith in their traditional superstitions and customs. An excellent way for a young damsel to discover who her future husband is to be is to go to the churchyard on St. Valentine's Eve, and when the clock strikes the hour of midnight, if she runs round the church she will see the happy man running after her. It has never been known to fail, perhaps from the fact that it has never been tried, for it is very doubtful if a girl could be found in Derbyshire or any other county with sufficient pluck to test it. An old remedy for the toothache was to attract the "worm" into a glass of water by first inhaling the smoke of some dried herbs. Those who had plenty of faith, and some imagination, have actually seen the tiny offender. Maypoles and the parish stocks are still to be found in nooks and corners of the Peak and farther south, and that pretty custom once prevailed of hanging garlands in memory of the village maidens who died young. From a little crown made of cardboard, with paper rosettes and ornaments, pairs of gloves cut out of paper were suspended fingers down-



GARLANDS, ASHFORD CHURCH.
(Photo by Rev. J. R. Luxmoore.)

wards, with the name of the young deceased and her age duly recorded upon them. And so they hang from the oak beams of the roof. In Ashford church, near Haddon, there is quite a collection of them suspended from a pole in the north aisle. The oldest dates from 1747, but the custom was discontinued about ninety years ago. In Hampshire, however, these "virgins' crowns" are still made. At the ancient village church of Abbotts Ann, near Andover, there are about forty of them, and only the other day one was added with due ceremony. The garland was made of thin wood covered with paper, and decorated with black and white rosettes, with fine paper gloves suspended in the middle. It was carried before the coffin by two young girls dressed in white, with white shawls and hoods, who each held one end of a white wand from which the crown depended. During the service it was placed upon the coffin by one of the bearers, and at the close was again suspended from the wand and borne to the grave. It was afterwards laid on a thin iron rod branching from a small shield placed high up on the wall of the nave of the church. One of these garlands may still be seen in St. Albans Abbey.

Another pretty custom is that of "well-dressing," which yet survives at the village of Tissington above Ashbourne, and of recent

years has been revived in other Derbyshire villages, like the modern modified May-day festivities. It dates from the time of the Emperor Nero, when the philosopher Lucius Seneca told the people that they should show their gratitude to the natural springs by erecting altars and offering sacrifices. The floral tributes of to-day, which are placed around the wells and springs on Holy Thursday, are of various devices, made mostly of wild flowers bearing biblical texts; and the village maidens take these in formal procession and present them after a little consecration service in the church. One would like to see this pretty custom revived in other counties.

At Hathersage, beautifully situated among the hills some eight miles above Bakewell, Oak Apple Day is kept in memory by suspending a wreath of flowers on one of the pinnacles of the church tower. The interior, with its faded green baize-lined box-pews duly labelled with brass plates bearing the owners' names, has a charming old-world appearance. In the church is a fine altar-tomb and brasses to the Eyres of North Lees, an ancient house among the hills of the Hoodbrook valley.

The ancient ceremony of rush-bearing at Glossop, formerly connected with the church, has, we understand, degenerated into a "public-house show"; which is a pity. In Huntingdonshire,

however, there was until some years back a somewhat similar custom of strewing green rushes, from the banks of the river Ouse, on the floor of the old church of Fenstanton, near St. Ives; but in Old Weston, in the same county, newly mown grass is still strewn upon the floor of the parish church upon the village feast Sunday: the festival of St. Swithin. The original ceremony of "rush-bearing," a survival of the ancient custom of strewing the floors of dwellings with marsh rushes, was a pretty sight. A procession of village maidens, dressed in white, carried the bundles of rushes into the church (accompanied, of course, by the inevitable band), and hung garlands of flowers upon the chancel rails. The festival at Glossop, and in places in the adjoining county of Cheshire, however, was more like the last survival of May-day: the monopoly of sweeps,—a cart-load of rushes was drawn round the village by gaily bedecked horses with a motley band of morris-dancers accompanying it, who, having made a collection, resorted to the public-house before taking their bundles to the church. Had they reversed the order of things it is possible the custom in some places would have been suffered to continue. Until a comparatively recent date the floor of Norwich Cathedral was strewn with rushes on Mayor's day; and there is still preserved among the civic treasures a wonderful

green wickerwork dragon hobby-horse, or rather hobby-dragon, with wings, and movable jaws studded with nails for teeth, which always made its appearance in the streets on these days of public festival.

NOOKS IN YORKSHIRE

In a journey across our largest county, so famous for its grand cathedrals and ruined castles and abbeys, one could not wish for greater variety either in scenery or association. Between the Queen of Scots' prison in Sheffield Manor and the reputed Dotheboys Hall a few miles below the mediæval-looking town of Barnard Castle, there is vast difference of romance; and yet what more unromantic places than Bowes or Sheffield! Indeed, take them all round, the towns and villages of Yorkshire have a grey and dreary look about them; and the houses partake of the pervading character, or want of character, of the busy manufacturing centres. But the natural scenery is quite another matter, and with such lovely surroundings one often sighs that the picturesque and the utilitarian are so opposed to one another. We do not, however, merely allude to the buildings in the southern part of the county, for many villages in the prettiest parts have nothing architecturally attractive about their houses. The snug creeper-clad cottage, so familiar in the

south of England, is, comparatively speaking, a rarity, and one misses the warmth of colour amid the everlasting grey.

The express having dropped us in nearly the southernmost corner, our object is to get out of the busy town of Sheffield as quickly as possible; but, as before stated, romance lingers around the remains of the ancient seat of the sixth Earl of Shrewsbury, who lies buried in the parish church, for under his charge the Scots' queen remained here a prisoner for many years; and Wolsey, too, was brought here on his way to Leicester.

Upon the road to Barnsley there is little to delay us until we come to a turning to the right a couple of miles or so to the south of the town. After the continual chimney-shafts the little village of Worsborough is refreshing. The church has many points of interest. The entrance porch has a fine oak ceiling with carved bosses, and the original oak door is decorated with carved oak tracery. The most interesting thing within is the monument to Sir Roger Rockley, a sixteenth-century knight whose effigy in armour lies beneath a canopy supported by columns very much resembling a four-poster of the time of Henry VII. The similarity is heightened by the fact that the tomb is entirely of carved oak, painted and gilded. The bed, however, has two divisions, and beneath the recumbent wooden effigy of Sir Roger with

staring white eyes, is the gruesome figure of a skeleton in a shroud, also made more startling by its colouring. How the juvenile Worsboroughites must dread this spectre, for its position in the church is conspicuous! There is a brass to Thomas Edmunds, secretary to William, Earl of Strafford, who lived in the manor-house close by, a plain stone gabled house with two wings and a small central projection. It is a gloomy looking place, and once possessed some gloomy relics of the martyr king, including the stool upon which he knelt on Whitehall scaffold. These relics belonged to Sir Thomas Herbert, the close attendant upon Charles during the later days of his imprisonment, and descended to the Edmunds family by the marriage of his widow with Henry Edmunds of Worsborough.[1] The park presumably has become public property, and the road running through it is much patronised by the black-faced gentlemen of the neighbouring collieries. Nor are the ladies of the mining districts picturesque, although they seem to affect the costume of the dames of old Peru by showing scarcely more than an eye beneath their shawls.

Some three miles to the west of Worsborough is Wentworth Castle (a successor to the older castle,

[1] We have described these relics (now in the possession of Mrs. Martin-Edmunds) in detail in the *Memoirs of the Martyr King.*

the remains of which stood on the high ground above), called by some Stainborough Hall to distinguish it from Wentworth Woodhouse. The historic house stands high, commanding fine views, but marred by mining chimney-shafts on the adjacent hills. The exterior of the mansion is classic and formal, and exteriorly there is little older than the time of George I.; the interior, however, takes us back another century or more, and the panelled porters' hall and carved black oak staircase were old when powdered wigs were introduced. In Queen Anne's State rooms and in the cosy ante-chambers there are rich tapestries, wonderful old cabinets, and costly china, reminding one of the treasures of Holland House. But the finest room is the picture gallery, one hundred and eighty feet in length and twenty-four feet in breadth, and very lofty. The ceiling represents the sky with large gold stars, and has a curious effect of making it appear much higher than it really is. It belongs to the time of the second Earl of Strafford, who built all this part of the house. The unfortunate first earl looks down from the wall with dark melancholy eyes: a face full of character and determination, and different vastly from the dreamy weakness revealed in the profile of the sovereign who cut his head off. The despotic ruler of Ireland is said to walk the chambers of the castle with his head under his

arm, which, strangely enough, seems to be the fashion with decapitated ghosts; and Strafford is a busy ghost, for he has to divide his haunting among two other mansions, Wentworth Woodhouse and Temple Newsam. Here is Oliver, too, who made as great a mistake as Charles did by resorting to the axe. The young Earl of Pembroke looks handsome in his long fair ringlets; and so does the youthful Henrietta, Baroness Wentworth (a pretty childish figure fondling a dog), whose end was every way as tragic as her kinsman's.

Many of the bedrooms are named after birds and flowers, a pretty idea that we have not met elsewhere. The colour blue predominates in those we call to mind, namely, the "Blue-tit room," the "Kingfisher room," the "Peacock room," the "Cornflower room," and the "Forget-me-not room." Just outside the park, near a house that was formerly kept as a menagerie, is a comfortable old-fashioned inn, the "Strafford Arms," the landlord of which was butler to two generations of the Vernon-Wentworths, and in consequence he is quite an authority on genealogical matters; and where his memory does not serve, has Debrett handy at his elbow. Being a Somersetshire man he has brought the hospitality of the western counties with him to the northern heights. He points with pride to the

cricket-ground behind the inn, the finest "pitch" in Yorkshire.

Let us avoid the town of Barnsley and turn eastwards towards Darfield, whose interest is centred in its church. The ceilings of the aisles, presumably like the picture gallery at Wentworth Castle, are supposed to represent the heavens, but the colour is inclined to be sea-green, and the clouds and stars are feathery. A fine Perpendicular font is surmounted by an elaborate Jacobean cover; opposite, at the east end of the church, is a fine but rather dilapidated tomb of a fourteenth-century knight and his dame, and the effigy of the latter gives a good idea of the costume of Richard II.'s time. Upon a wooden stand close by there is a chained Bible, and the support looks so light that one would think the whole could be carried off bodily, until one tries its prodigious weight.

Another tomb, of the Willoughbys of Parham, bears upon it some strange devices, including an owl with a crown upon its head. The seventeenth-century oak pews and some earlier ones with carved bench-ends, add considerably to the interest of the interior. The ancient coffer in the vestry, as well as a carved oak chest and chairs, must not pass unnoticed.

Barnborough to the east, and Great Houghton to the north-east, are both famous in their way;

the former for a traditional fight between a man and a wild cat, which for ferocity knocked points off the Kilkenny record. The Hall was once the property of Sir Thomas More (another of those beheaded martyrs who are doomed to walk the earth with their heads under their arms), and contains a "priest's hole," which, had it existed in the Chancellor's day, might have tempted him to try and save his life. Great Houghton Hall, the ancient seat of the Roders (a brass to whom may be seen in Darfield church), is now an inn, indeed has been an inn for over half a century. Once having been a stately mansion, it has an air of mystery and romance; and there are rumours that before it lost caste, in the transition stage between private and public life, one of its chambers remained draped in black, in mourning for the Earl of Strafford's beheading on Tower Hill in 1641. It is a huge building of many mullioned windows and pinnacled gables; but within the last two years the upper part of the big bays of the front have been destroyed, and a verandah introduced which spoils this side, and whoever planned this alteration can have had but little reverence for ancient buildings. The rooms on the ground floor are mostly bare; but ascending a wide circular stone staircase, with carved oak arches overhead, there are pleasant surprises in store. You step into the

spacious "Picture gallery," devoid of ancestral portraits truly, but with panelled walls and Tudor doorways. The mansion was stripped of its furniture over a century and a half ago, but there are chairs of the Chippendale period to compensate, and a great wardrobe of the Stuart period too big presumably to get outside. Two bedrooms are panelled from floor to ceiling and have fine overmantels, one of which has painted panels depicting "Life" and "Death." But a great portion of the house is dilapidated, and to see its ornamental plaster ceilings one would have to risk disappearing through the floors below, like the demon in the pantomime. Mine host of the "Old Hall Inn" is genuinely sympathetic, and is quite of the opinion that the oak fittings that have been removed would look best in their original position; and this is only natural, for he has lived there all his life, and his mother was born in the house; and he proudly points at the Jacobean pew in the adjacent church where as a child he sat awestruck, holding his grandfather's hand while the good old gentleman took his forty winks. The little church in its cabbage-grown enclosure is quite an untouched gem, with formal array of seventeenth-century pews with knobby ends, a fine carved oak pulpit and sounding-board. Its exterior is non-ecclesiastical in appearance, with

rounded stone balustrade ornamentation. While photographing the building an interested party observed that he had lived at Houghton all his life, but had never observed there was a door on that side,—a proof that residents in a place rarely see the most familiar objects. Nevertheless, he discovered the door of the "Old Hall," and entered.

Pontefract Castle, so rich in historical associations, is disappointing, because there is so little of it left. It is difficult in these fragmentary but ponderous walls to imagine the fortress as it appeared in the days of Elizabeth. From an ancient print of that time it looks like a fortified city, with curious pinnacles and turrets upon its many towers. The great round towers of the keep had upon the summit quite a collection, like intermediate pawns and castles from a chessboard. The curtain walls connected seven round towers, and there were a multitude of square towers within. There is something very suggestive of the Duncan-Macbeth stronghold in the narrow stairway between those giant rounded towers. It is like a tomb, and one shudders at the thought of the "narrow damp chambers" in the thickness of the wall of the Red Tower, where tradition says King Richard II. was done to death. By the irony of fate it was the lot of many proud barons during some part of their career to occupy the

least desirable apartment of their castles; and thus it was with Edward II.'s cousin, Thomas Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster, who from his own dungeon was brought forth to be beheaded. In a garden near the highwayman's resort, Ferrybridge, above Pontefract, may be seen a stone coffin which was dug up in a field on the outskirts of the castle, and supposed to be that of the unfortunate earl. At Pontefract, too, Lord Rivers, Sir Thomas Vaughan, Sir Richard Grey, and others were hurried into another world by the Protector Richard; so altogether the castle holds a good record for deeds of darkness, and the creepy feeling one has in that narrow stairway between those massive walls is fully justified by past events. The old castle held out stoutly for the king in the Civil Wars. For many months, in 1645, it stood a desperate siege by Fairfax and General Poyntz before the garrison capitulated. Three years later it was captured again for the Royalists by Colonel Morrice, and held with great gallantry against General Lambert even after the execution of Charles I. In the March following, the stronghold surrendered, saving Morrice and five others who had not shown mercy to Colonel Rainsborough when he fell into their hands. These six had the option of escaping if they could within a week. "The garrison," says Lord Clarendon, "made

several sallies to effect the desired escape, in one of which Morrice and another escaped; in another, two more got away; and when the six days were expired and the other two remained in the castle, their friends concealed them so effectually, with a stock of provisions for a month, that rendering the castle and assuring Lambert that the six were all gone, and he was unable to find them after the most diligent search, and had dismantled the castle, they at length got off also." There are still some small chambers hewn out of the solid rock on which the castle is built, reached by a subterranean passage on the north side; and perhaps here was the successful lurking-place. Colonel Morrice and his companion, Cornet Blackburn, were afterwards captured in disguise at Lancaster.

In the pleasure gardens of to-day, with various inscription boards specifying the position of the Clifford Tower, Gascoyne's Tower, the King's Tower, and so forth, we get but a hazy idea of this once practically impregnable fortress, covering an area of seven acres. Concerning Richard II.'s death, it is doubtful whether the truth will ever be arrived at. The story that he escaped, and died nineteen years afterwards in Scotland, is less likely than the supposition that he died from the horrors of starvation; on the other hand, the story of the attack by Sir Piers Exton's

assassins is almost strengthened by the evidence of a seventeenth-century tourist, who, prior to its destruction in the Civil War, records: "The highest of the seven towers is the Round Tower, in which that unfortunate prince was enforced to flee round a poste till his barbarous butchers inhumanly deprived him of life. *Upon that poste the cruell hackings and fierce blowes doe still remaine.*" Mr. Andrew Lang perhaps can solve this historic mystery; or perhaps he has already done so? New Hall, close at hand, must have been a grand old house; but it is now roofless, and crumbling to decay. It is a picturesque late-Tudor mansion, with a profusion of mullioned windows and a central bay. The little glass that remains only adds to its forlorn appearance.

Ferrybridge and Brotherton both have an old-world look. The latter place is famous for the battle fought there between Yorkists and Lancastrians; and as the birthplace of Thomas de Brotherton, the fifth son of King Edward I. The old inns of Ferrybridge recall the prosperous coaching days; but the revival of business on the road which has been brought about by cycle and motor, will have but little effect on this village with a past. The hostelry by the fine stone bridge that gives the place its name, has a past connected with notorious gentlemen of the road, and an entry in an old account-book runs as follows:

"A traveller in a gold-laced coat ordered and drank two bottles of wine—doubtless mischief to-night, for the traveller, methinks, is that villain Dick Turpyn." How vividly this recalls that excellent picture by Seymour Lucas, R.A., where a landlord of the Joe Willet type is eyeing, between the whiffs from his long churchwarden, a suspicious guest, who having tasted mine host's vintage has dropped asleep, regardless of the fact that his brace of flintlocks are conspicuously visible.

Between here and Leeds are two fine mansions, Ledston Hall and Kippax Park. The former is a very uncommon type of Elizabethan architecture, almost un-English in character. It is a stone-built house of the time of James I., with Dutch-like gables and narrow square towers. In the reign of Charles I. it belonged to Thomas, Earl of Strafford; but his son, the second earl, sold the estate. Kippax in its way is original in construction, but savours somewhat of Strawberry Hill Gothic. The ancient family of Bland have been seated here since the time of Elizabeth, the direct male line, however, dying out in the middle of the eighteenth century. Sir Thomas Bland was one of the gallant Royalists who defended Pontefract Castle during the Civil War.

A few miles to the north-west is the grand old mansion, Temple Newsam. Like Hatfield House,

which in many respects it resembles, it is built of red-brick with stone coigns, and the time-toned warm colour is acceptable in this county of grey stone. It was built like many so-called Elizabethan houses in the reign of James I., and, like Castle Ashby, has around the three sides of the quadrangle a parapet of letters in open stone work which runs as follows: "All glory and praise be given to God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost on high, peace on earth, goodwill towards men, honour and true allegiance to our gracious king, loving affections amongst his subjects, health and plenty within this house." The loyal sentiments are not those of Mary Queen of Scots' husband, Lord Darnley, who was born in the earlier house, but of the builder, Sir Anthony Ingram, who bought the estate from the Duke of Lennox. Of all the spacious rooms, the picture gallery is the finest. It is over a hundred feet in length and contains a fine collection of old masters and some remarkable china. Albert Durer's hard and microscopic art is well represented, as well as the opposite extreme in Rembrandt's breadth of style. But the gem of all is a head by Reynolds (of, we think, a Lady Gordon), a picture that connoisseurs would rave about. A small picture of Thomas Ingram is almost identical with that of the Earl of Pembroke we have mentioned at Wentworth Castle. In one of the bedrooms (famous for their tapestry

hangings and ancient beds) are full-length portraits of Mary Queen of Scots, Queen Elizabeth, and James I., the first like the well-known portraits at Hardwick and Welbeck. On one of the staircases is an interesting picture of Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, in a turban, with the favourite spaniel who appears in many of her portraits. She holds in her hand the picture of her lord and master, the duke who was so jealous of her. A new grand staircase with elaborately carved newels, after the style of that at Hatfield, has been added to the mansion recently, and harmonises admirably with its more ancient surroundings.

The park is fine and extensive, but beyond, the signs of the proximity of busy Leeds obtrude and spoil the scenery. We went from here to the undesirable locality of Hunslet in search of a place called Knowsthorpe Hall, but had some considerable difficulty in finding it, for nobody seemed to know it by that name. "You warnts the Island," observed a mining gentleman, a light dawning upon him. So we got nearer by inquiring for "the Island," but then the clue was lost. Thousands of factory hands were pouring out of a very unlikely looking locality, but nobody knew such a place. In desperation we plunged into a primitive coffee-stall, around which black bogies were sitting at their mid-day meal. One

of them with more intelligence than the rest knew the place, but couldn't describe how to get to it. "Go up yon road," he said, "and ask for 'Whitakers.'" We followed the advice, and at the turning asked for 'Whitakers.'" "Is it the dressmakers ye mean?" was the reply of a small boy to whom we put the question. "Yes," we said, in entire ignorance whether it was the dressmakers or the almanac people. But having got so far there were landmarks that did the rest, and presently a big entrance gate was seen with painted on its side-pillars, "Knowsthorpe Olde Hall."

But there was no Island, not even a moat. The smoke of Leeds has given the stone walls a coat of black, but otherwise it is not unpicturesque, and would be more so if this original gateway remained. Within the last two years this has been removed as well as the steps leading down from the terrace. The gateway was called the "Stone Chairs," because of the niches or seats on either side of it. It is now, we understand, at Hoare Cross, near Burton-on-Trent. There is much oak within the house, and one panelled room has a very fine carved mantelpiece. The oak staircase, too, is graceful as well as uncommon in design. Close against one side of the house is a stone archway with sculptured figures of the time of James I. on either side of it,

GATEWAY, KNOWSTHORPE HALL

TOMB, DARFIELD CHURCH.

and the old lady in charge related the history of this happy pair, how the gentleman had wooed the damsel (a Maynard), but as he had not been to the wars she would have nothing to say to him. Consequently he buckled on his sword and engaged in the nearest battle; and to prove his valour, brought back with him as a love-token the arm which he had lost,—a statement sounding somewhat contradictory. Naturally after that she fell into his—other arm, and accepted him on the spot. This daughter of Mars, of course, now "revisits the glimpses of the moon" with her lover's arm, not around her waist in the ordinary fashion, but in her hand; and those who doubt the story may see her effigy thus represented. But the dignity of this happy pair is somewhat marred, for the only use to which they are now put is to form a stately entrance to—a hen-coop!

There are some interesting old houses between Leeds and Otley, the "Low" Halls of Rawdon and Yeadon, for instance. The former is a good Elizabethan house, and contains some interesting rooms. Low Hall, Yeadon, dates farther back, though its chief characteristics are of the same period. The interior is rich in ancient furniture, and there are some Knellers, which the artist is said to have painted on the spot. The saturnine features of the Merry Monarch are to be seen on

one side of the huge Tudor fireplace, and near at hand Nell Gwyn, probably a more correct likeness than a flattering one. There are ancient cabinets, chests, and tables contemporary with the house; and what is more interesting still, the cabinets and chests contain relics of Mary Queen of Scots, and the ruffs and collars that were fashionable three centuries ago. A gallery, wainscoted with large panels of a later period, extends the length of the house; and at the western extremity of it a bedroom, also panelled, possesses a hiding-place or secret cupboard which it would baffle the most persevering to discover, but when the panel is pushed aside, the trick of it looks so very simple. Of the Stuart relics we shall speak presently in referring to Mary Queen of Scots' imprisonment at Bolton Castle.

Passing through Guiseley, which is situated in the midst of worsted mills, with the stocks by a lamp-post in the middle of the street as if they were a present-day necessity, you climb a hill and then come suddenly upon a lovely view, with Otley, "the Switzerland of Yorkshire," lying in the Wharfe valley below. The Chevin Hill is over nine hundred feet in height, and from it you are supposed to see York Cathedral on one side and the mountains of Westmoreland on the other. As the Chevin is the lion of the place, it is the duty of visitors to go to the top. Alpine climbers

may enjoy this sort of task, but there are some people who do not even wish to say that they have seen a city some six-and-twenty miles away; but such as these who go to Otley and do not inconvenience themselves would be looked upon by the Otleyites with pity. But there is another thing which the town is proud of too, and that is its lofty Maypole, which, standing in a firm socket of stone, is guarded round by iron rails. There are far more Maypoles in Yorkshire than in any other county, and it is pleasing to find the people are thus conservative; though truly when they get blown down, they don't often trouble themselves enough to put them up again. There are some interesting monuments in the church, one on the right of the chancel to General Fairfax's grandparents, two stately recumbent effigies of James I.'s time. There are mural monuments to the Fawkeses of Farnley Hall (a much altered Elizabethan mansion, containing Cromwellian relics: the Lord Protector's hat, sword, and watch, and Fairfax's drum) and a Vavasour of Weston Hall, who was a philanthropist in his way, for he was buried in wool to promote the local trade. He is represented on his monument neatly packed, and looks so cosy that the bas-relief is suggestive of the undertaker's advertisement, "Why live and be wretched when you can be buried comfortably for five pound ten?" In the vestry there is a

splendid set of old oak chairs of which the verger is not a little proud.

A pleasant meadow walk by the riverside leads to Leathley, which has a Norman church, but can scarcely be called a village, for there is no inn. A formidable pair of stocks stand ready by the churchyard; but as nothing stronger than milk can be procured, they have not been worn out with too much work. Again, at Weston on the other side of the Wharfe river we come across the roadside stocks (like the usual Yorkshire type, with two uprights of stone) by the spreading roots of an ancient tree. Weston Hall is a long low Tudor building, with at one end a broad bay of three storeys. An old banqueting-house in the grounds is ornamented with shields of arms; and formerly the windows of it were full of heraldic stained glass, some of which is now in the windows of the Hall. From here we went northwards in search of Swinsty Hall, over a lonely moorland district. The road goes up and up until you are not surprised when you come to a signpost pointing to "To Snowdon." To the left, you are told, leads to "Blubberhouses," wherever that may be. For preference we chose the latter road, and soon got completely lost in the wilds. The only sign of civilisation was a barn, where we had the fortune to find an old man who presumably spoke the pure dialect, for we couldn't make head or tail of

LEATHLEY STOCKS.

STOCKS AT WESTON.

it. "Swinsty—ai, you go on ter road until it is," was the direction he gave, and we went on and until it *wasn't*. At length, however, after plodding knee deep in marshy land and saturated heather, we found the object of our search perched in a lonely meadow above a wide stretch of water. It looked as if it had a gloomy history; and no wonder that some of the upper rooms are held in awe, for there the ghost of a person with the unromantic name of Robinson is said to count over his ill-gotten gains, which he brought down from London in waggons when the Plague of 1666 was raging. He had the good fortune to escape contamination, and once back with his plundered wealth he meant to have what nowadays we call "a good time"; but the story has a moral, for it got winded abroad how he got his gold, and nobody would have anything to do with him or his money, and by the irony of fate he had to spend the rest of his days in trying to wash away the germs of infection.

The hall is entered through a spacious porch in the roof of which is hung an enormous bell. The room you enter is by no means gloomy. A carved oak staircase with balustrade of peculiar form leads to other rooms panelled to the ceiling, with fine overmantels. The leads of the small window-panes are of fanciful design; one bears the date 1627 and the initials I. W. H., and these

occur again with the date 1639 in some oak carving in one of the bedrooms. A "well" stone staircase between rough-hewn stone walls leads up to the attics, which have open timber roofs with semi-circular span to the main beams. They look as if they were but recently put up, so fresh does the wood look, and the pegs that join the timbers still protrude as if they had just been hammered in, and awaited the workman's axe to cut them level. A word upon the subject of these old roofs may not be out of place. When old houses are restored, of course it is the proper thing to open out an original timber roof where the original hall or chamber has been divided and partitioned, but in so many instances nowadays flat ceilings are removed to show the open timbers which were *never intended to be seen.* Bedrooms are thus made cold and bare, with not nearly enough protection from the draughts from the tiles. The attics at Swinsty are a proof of this, there being no great distance between the floor and the roof. Another thing, if the floors were done away with here, Mr. Robinson would have to come down a storey, and that is not desirable.

On the way to Swinsty, by the bye, a ruinous house is passed on the right about midway between there and Otley. It is of no great architectural interest, but is singular in construction, having a projecting turret containing a spiral staircase at the

back, which presumably was the only entrance. It is lofty, and has square windows with a bay in the centre, but it is now only a shell. Mr. Ingram in his *Haunted Homes* relates that Dob Park Lodge, as the place is called, is reputed to be haunted by a huge black dog who has the power of speech, and is said to watch over a hidden treasure in the vaults, like the dog with saucer eyes in Hans Andersen. The entrance to these is locally supposed to be somewhere at the foot of the winding stair, and so far only one person has ventured to explore the depths; but when he did, he actually saw a great chest of gold!—but then we must take into account that he was very drunk. Fewston village, not far from Swinsty, is picturesquely situated on a knoll above the lake or reservoir; but the church, mostly of William III.'s time, has nothing of interest save a few stalls and a pretty little font cover. The wooden spiked altar rails might almost be the palings of a suburban garden, whilst the crude square panes of red and blue of the chancel windows should be anywhere but in a church.

To the north-east is "Catch'em Corner"; but it is uncertain what is to be caught except a chill, for the position is very bleak. Striking northwards we get into the delightful Nidd valley. To the right lies Ripley, famous for the rood screen, the ancient glass, and Edwardian tomb

of the Ingilbys of the castle, which Tudor structure surrendered to the Parliament a day or so before Marston Moor was fought. Here Cromwell is said to have sat up all night before the battle, hob-a-nob with his unwilling hostess.

Going northwards from Fewston, the prettiest part of the road to Pateley is struck near the village of Dacre. The romantic rocks and glens hereabouts are famous, and much frequented by tourists, consequently sixpences and threepences have to be frequently disbursed. The price is cheap enough, but the romance is spoiled. Hack Fall, near Masham, to the north-east, is as lovely a spot as one could wish to see, but there are too many signs of civilisation about. It is like taming a lion. The guide-book tells you to go along until you get to a "refreshment house," which almost reads like an advertisement in disguise.

There is a sculptured Saxon cross in Masham churchyard, and the church contains a fine monument to the Wyvells of Burton Constable manor, an old house near Finghall, to the north-west, where members of the family are also buried. The famous Jervaulx Abbey ruins nestle in a hollow on the right of the road to Middleham. When close upon it we asked the way of a yokel, but he shook his head; and then it dawned upon him what we meant: "It's Jarvey ye warnt," he

said, and pointed straight ahead. Scott's worthy, Prior Aylmer, would surely beam with joy at the tender care bestowed upon the remains of the establishment over which he once presided; and the park might grace the finest modern dwelling, judging by the well-kept lawns and walks; but all this trimness looks less natural to a ruin than the more rustic surroundings of Easby, for example. The remains of the Cistercian monastery are rather fragmentary, consisting mainly of some graceful octagonal pillars and a row of lofty lancet windows in the wall of the refectory, and some round-headed arches of the chapter-house. It was destroyed in 1539, and the beautiful screen of the church carried off to Aysgarth, where it may now be seen.

Continuing along the road to Middleham, Danby Hall, the ancient seat of the Scropes, is seen in the distance on the right; but the river intervenes, and one has to go beyond East Witton before a crossing can be obtained. This village, built on either side of a wide green, has nothing out of the common except its Maypole and its very conspicuous Blue Lion rampant. A blue lion is a little change after the hackneyed red, and the beast looks proud of his originality. Witton probably was much prettier before the jubilee celebration of George III.'s reign, when the old church and most of the old houses were pulled down.

By the old grey bridge (with the pillar of a sundial in the centre, dated 1674) the Cover and Yore Rivers join hands with not a little fuss, like the enthusiasm of a new-made friendship. The road to Danby Hall runs level with the river then branches to the left. The mansion is Elizabethan; but the stone balustrade was added in the middle of the seventeenth century, and the small cupola-crowned towers were added subsequently. The oldest part is a square tower to the north-east, where, in the time of religious persecution, there was a small oratory or chapel for secret services. In the heraldic glass of the windows the ancient family of Scrope may be traced from Lord Scrope who fought at Flodden up to the present day, and their history may be followed by the portraits of the various generations on the walls. A curious discovery was made here in the early part of the last century. One of the chimneys in a stack of four could not be accounted for, and a plummet of lead was dropped down each of them, three of which found an outlet but the fourth could not be found. To get at the bottom of the mystery, a not too bulky party was lowered down, and he found himself in a small chamber full of long cut-and-thrust swords, flintlock pistols, and the ancient saddlery of untanned leather for a troop of fifty horse. Not much value was set upon such things in those days, so the harness was put to good

account and utilised for cart-horse gear upon the farm. But the dispersal of the ancient weapons has a history too, for at the time that England was trembling with the fear of an invasion from the dreaded "Boney," a cottage caught light one night on one of the surrounding hills; and this being taken as a signal of alarm, the beacon on top of Penhill was fired. The terror-stricken villagers rushed everywhere for weapons, but none could be provided, and the good squire of Danby speedily distributed the secret store which had been hidden in the house for the Jacobite insurrection of 1715. In time the yokels returned, and there was a week's rejoicing and merry-making that the blazing beacon after all had only proved a flash in the pan. The pistols and swords, however, were not returned save one, which may still be seen with the armourer's marks on the blade, "Shotley" on one side and "Bridge" on the other.[1] Another has found its way into the little museum at Bolton Castle. In demolishing a cottage at Middleham it was discovered up in the thatch roof, where it was put, perhaps, pending another alarm. The hiding-place was converted into a butler's room by Major Scrope's grandfather.

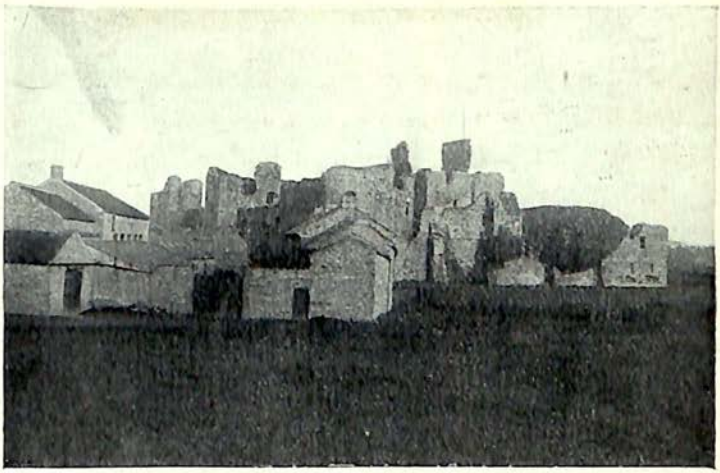
Among the portraits are some good Lelys,

[1] In the account in *Secret Chambers* of the inscription on the swords, it is given in error as "Shortly."

including two of Sir Carr Scrope who was so enamoured of the Court physician's daughter.[1] Another Lely of a handsome girl is said to represent one of the Royalist Stricklands of Sizergh. Above the black oak staircase of James I.'s time hangs a rare portrait of Mary of Modena; for one seldom sees her when the beauty of youth had departed, for naturally she did not like to be handed thus down to posterity. The queen looks sour here, which tallies with the accounts we have of her in later life; but truly she had cause enough to make her sour.

From the Yore River the ground ascends to Middleham, now only a sleepy looking village but called a "town." Above the roof-tops at the summit of the hill stands the mediæval castle where resided in great pomp that turbulent noble, Warwick the "kingmaker." Here it was that he imprisoned Edward IV., the monarch he had helped to put upon the throne, for daring to marry the widowed daughter of Sir Richard Woodville in preference to a Nevill. When, the year after reinstating Henry VI. for a brief space, the great feudal baron ended his career on Barnet battlefield, his castle at Middleham was handed over by Edward to his brother Richard, who had also a claim upon it by his marriage with the "kingmaker's" daughter.

[1] See *Some Beauties of the Seventeenth Century.*



MIDDLEHAM CASTLE.

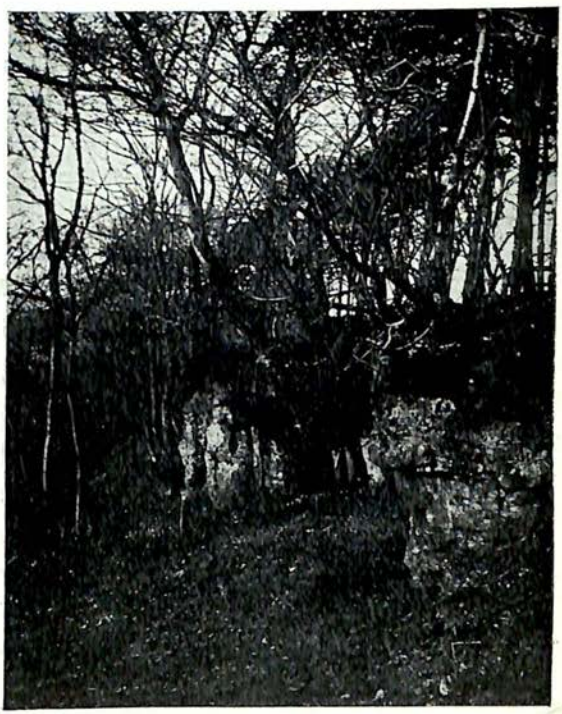
SWINSTY HALL.—*See page 246*

Here "Crookback," or rather "Crouchback," was living before he usurped the Crown in 1483; and here his son the young Prince Edward died upon the first anniversary, as a providential punishment for the death of his little cousins in the Tower. Richard, by the way, is said to have had another natural son who lived into the reign of Edward VI. and died in a small house on the Eastwell estate near Wye in Kent. Richard Plantagenet's death is duly recorded in the parish register, distinguished by the mark of a V, which distinguishes other entries of those of noble birth, and a plain tomb in the chancel is supposed to be his place of interment. Until an old man he preserved his incognito, when Sir Thomas Moyle discovered that a mason at work upon his house was none other than a king's son. His youth had been spent under charge of a schoolmaster, who had taken him to Bosworth field and introduced him into Richard's tent. The king received him in his arms and told him he was his father, and if he survived the battle he would acknowledge him to be his son; but if fortune should go against him, he should on no account reveal who he was. On the following day in entering Leicester a naked figure lying across a horse's back was pointed out to him as the same great person whose star and garter had inspired him with awe.

The walls of the Norman castle keep are of

immense thickness, and protected without by others almost as formidable of a later date. The great hall was on the first floor, and the tower where little Edward Plantagenet was born (the Red Tower) at the south-west corner; but tradition hasn't kept alive much to carry the imagination back to the time when the powerful Nevill reigned here in his glory. The escape of Edward IV. has been made realistic in the immortal bard's *King Henry VI.*, and Scene v. Part iii. might be read in less romantic spots than in Wensleydale, with this grand old ruin standing out in the distance like one of Doré's castles. In this case, distance "lends enchantment," as Middleham itself is by no means lovely. The ancient market-cross would look far less commonplace and tomb-like were the top of it again knocked off. The site of the swine market bears the cognosance of "Crouch-back," which is scarcely a compliment to his memory; but this antique monument is put vastly in the shade by a jubilee fountain, the only up-to-date thing in the place, and quite out of harmony with the ring where bulls were baited within living memory.

In Spennithorne church, near Middleham, there is an ancient altar-tomb of John Fitz-Randolph, of the family of the early lords of the castle before the Nevills became possessed of it. Along the font are several coloured shields of arms of the



QUEEN'S GAP, LEYBURN "SHAWL."

various families with whom they intermarried. The nave of the church has an odd appearance, as the north and south aisles are separated by a series of distinct arches, the latter Early English, the former pure Norman. A very interesting thirteenth-century screen was originally at Jervaulx Abbey. On the west wall there is a large fresco of Father Time, dating perhaps two hundred years later. The rector must be commended for hanging in his church a brief summary of the points of interest, and many might follow this laudable example.

Leyburn stands high among the hills, and must have been a picturesque old market-place before the ancient town-hall, market-cross, and two stately elms were removed. The great wide street has now a bare and by no means attractive appearance, and were it not for the lovely surroundings it would not form so popular a centre for exploring. The "Shawl," the huge natural terrace, on a rocky base high up above the tree-tops of the woods below, is, of course, its great feature, and a more delightful walk could not be found in England, with the softest turf to walk upon and the glorious panorama in front. Conspicuous among the heights is flat-topped Penhill, standing boldly out against the wide expanse of dale, upon whose crest are the ruins of a chapel of the old Knights Templars. A gap in the rock,

with a path running westwards through the woods, is known as "Queen's Gap," for Mary Queen of Scots when she fled from Bolton Castle got thus far when she was overtaken in attempting to urge her horse through the narrow ravine. In consequence of this, the "Shawl" locally is said to derive its name from the shawl the prisoner dropped upon the way, giving her pursuers a clue; which on the face of it is ridiculous, as the name is derived either from the Saxon *Sholl* or Scandinavian *Schall.* Bolton is some five miles away to the west, and the poor captive was to have gone northwards to Richmond and thence to her native land; and at Bellerby, between Richmond and Leyburn, a halt was to have been made at the Hall, the seat of the Royalist family of Scott, where a company of Scots guards was stationed ready to receive her. The old Hall still stands on the left-hand side of the village green as you enter, and looks as if it had a history.

At Bolton the window may be seen from which she was lowered to the ground, and one can trace the way she took in a north-easterly direction across the rocky bed of the rushing stream into the woods below the "Shawl." The window from which she escaped is the upper one of the three running horizontally with the south-western tower. There is another window to the prison-room which looks into the inner courtyard. The apartment is

BOLTON CASTLE.

BELLERBY OLD HALL.

grim and bare, with a small fireplace, and steps leading down into a larger bare apartment, once the "drawing-room." Though externally the castle is not so picturesque as Middleham, it is much more perfect and interesting. The hooded stone fireplaces remain in the walls, and various rooms can be located, from the hall and chapel to the vault-like stables in the basement. The well, too, is perfect, with scooped-out wall to the upper chambers, not forgetting the awful dungeon in the solid rock. A large apartment with wide Tudor fireplace has been converted into a museum, and the curiosities are of a varied nature, from cocking spurs and boxing-gloves from the sporting centres of Leyburn and Middleham to the bull-fight banderillos of Spain. There is quite an assortment of weird-looking instruments of torture, which, after all, are only toasting-dogs, huge cumbrous things like antediluvian insects or much magnified microbes. How is it these appurtenances of domestic comfort have entirely died out like the now extinct warming-pan? But this museum can no way be compared with Mr. Horne's wonderful collections at Leyburn. Here you can learn something about everything, for the kindly proprietor of the museum takes a pride in describing his curios. Those who have been to Middleham and seen the castle immortalised by Shakespere, may here study Edward IV.'s fair

hair. As rare a curiosity is a valentine of the time of William III. From the treasures of Egyptian tombs you skip to the first invented matches; from Babylonian inscriptions to early-Victorian samplers. And the learned antiquarian relates how he was educated in the old Yore mill at Aysgarth by old John Drummond, the grandson of the Jacobite Earl of Perth, who had to hide himself in a farm in Bishopdale (How Rig) for his hand in the '45, when the Scotch estates were confiscated for aiding the cause of the Bonnie Prince. Were it not for Mr. Horne's interest in old-time customs, the bull-ring in the market-place would have disappeared, for the socket was nearly worn through when he had it repaired. He relates how at the last bull-baiting the infuriated beast got away and sent the whole sportsmen flying, and at length was shot in Wensley village.

Wensley nestles in the valley, surrounded by hills. The interior of the church is rich in carvings from the ruinous abbey of Easby, near Richmond. The stalls from Easby have at the ends exceptionally bold and elaborate carvings with heraldic shields and arms, dating from the days of Edward IV. A nearly life-size brass, of the third Edward's time, is of its kind one of the finest in England,—an ecclesiastic in robes, with crossed hands pointing downwards. By the entrance door is a quaint old poor-box; but what

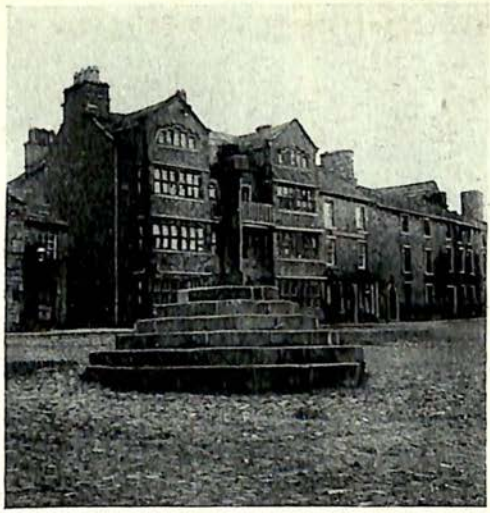
first strikes the eye as you enter, is the parclose screen from Easby Abbey, which, ill fitting its confined space, partially blocks the windows; but the effect of the elaborate carving against the tracery is very striking. It is early-Tudor in date, and belonged to the Scrope chantry, whose arms appear upon it, with those of Fitz-Hugh, Marmion, and other noble families. Within this screen, evidently a good many years later, a manorial pew was made, the side of which is within the parclose. To amalgamate the two, the latter has been somewhat mangled, doors having been added, with a pendant aloft to balance other large hollow pendants in the various arches. Unfortunately the whole has been painted with a dull grey and grained, a feeble attempt to represent marble, and parts of it are also gilt. A fixed settle has been added to the interior, so unless carefully examined it is difficult to detect how the parclose and pew were made into one. The two-decker pulpit and the wide old-fashioned pews lined with faded green baize and pink rep, bring us back to more modern times; but one would be loath to see them removed if restoration funds were lavish. Beneath the great manorial pew lie at rest the remains of the daughter of the thirteenth Lord Scrope, who by marriage with the first Duke of Bolton brought the castle into the Poulett family: until then the Scropes had

held possession through marriage with an heiress of the Nevills. The third wife of Charles Poulett, second Duke of Bolton, was Henrietta Crofts, the daughter of the Duke of Monmouth and Eleanor Needham.[1]

The Scrope who had charge of the Scots queen at Bolton Castle was Henry, the eleventh lord, whose wife was sister to the captive's plotting lover, the Duke of Norfolk, who also lost his head through these ambitious schemes; and doubtless it was the duke who contrived the queen's escape. She had been brought from the castle of Carlisle in July 1568, but after her attempt to escape was promptly removed (on January 26) to Tutbury Castle under charge of the Earl of Shrewsbury. The furniture of her private altar at Bolton, the altar-cloth, part of a rosary, a small bronze crucifix, and an alms-bag, are now preserved at Low Hall, Yeadon, mentioned earlier in this chapter. Her hawking gloves also: these are said to have been given to Lord Scrope upon her leaving.

Some miles to the west of Bolton is Nappa Hall (where the ancient family of Metcalfe lived since the reign of Henry VI., and where Metcalfes live to-day), a fortified manor-house with square towers (suggestive of Haddon), which also claims association with the unfortunate queen. By some accounts she slept here one night, by others two

[1] See *King Monmouth*.



ASKRIGG.

NAPPA HALL.

or more; and the tradition in the Metcalfe family says nine, in the highest chamber of the tallest tower. The date is not known, but probably she was brought here on her way from Carlisle Castle. The bed on which she slept, the top of which was very low, is now at Newby Hall, near Ripon. Our sanitary views being very distinct from those enlightened times, the pillars of these sixteenth-century beds are frequently raised (in some cases unnecessarily high), and unless one wished to be half-smothered, this is a natural thing to do if the bed is to be put to practical use; but nowadays the collectors of ancient furniture are again reducing the height, and bringing them down to their original proportions.

In asking the way to Nappa from the village of Askrigg, we were told to follow a "gentleman with a flock of sheep who was going up that way"; but as the distance was the matter of a couple of miles—and Yorkshire miles too, we preferred to follow the telegraph poles, which, after all, was more expeditious and quite as reliable. We give this as an instance of the ordinary pace at which things move in these parts; and perhaps it is as well, otherwise the old Hall built by William Taunton in 1678 (so it says on the door), with its upper balcony of wood looking upon the quaint old market-cross where the bull-ring used to be, might have given way to co-operative stores or some new hideous building.

The village-green of Bainbridge to the west is quite shut in with hills, and in the centre are the stocks, or rather the stone supports minus the most important part, with a rough rock seat which must have added considerably to the victim's discomfort. The principal curiosity, however, is the ancient custom prevailing here of blowing a horn at 10 p.m. during the summer months, to guide belated travellers on the moors. This was an excellent provision for safety hundreds of years ago, when Bainbridge was practically in the midst of a forest, and even in the twentieth century may have its uses. The older horn, that was used half a century ago, is now in Bolton Castle Museum. It is very large, and curiously twisted. The houses at Bainbridge are of the ordinary ugly Yorkshire type; but on high ground overlooking a ravine stands a nice old gabled grange, which must have tempted many an artist and photographer to pause upon their way to the famous Falls. These, of course, are very fine, but to our mind far less beautiful than the single plunge of water just below the grange, from a wide and scooped-out bed of precipitous rock. Nor are the high, low, and middle Falls of Aysgarth half so picturesque, though in a sense they are more boisterous, like coppery boiling water.

Aysgarth church is perched up high, and you

have to climb up many steps to reach it from the moss-grown bridge. The doors of most of the Yorkshire churches we found were kept unlocked; but this was an exception, so down those steps we had to come, to go in search of a key; but reaching the bottom of the flight, up we had to go again to try and find the rectory. Oh! the time that may be lost in hunting for a church key, and what a blessing it would be if notices were stuck up in the porches to say where they were kept. The interior of Aysgarth has a new appearance, but the splendid painted screen from Jervaulx (placed east and west instead of across the chancel) is worth a hunt for the key. Another screen, dated 1536, has upon it the grotesque carving of a fool's head with long-eared cap. Here again in the village are the stocks; but the Maypole, which once was its pride, long since has made its exit.

By far the nearest way to Richmond from Leyburn is across the moor, a rough and desolate road, but preferable to the terrible long way by Catterick, more than double the distance (by rail it is four times the distance!). This is the prettiest village of any on the way (which is not saying much, be it said). The early fifteenth-century church has some good monuments and brasses, one of the latter to a lady who for many years before she died carried her winding-sheet about with her; and one would naturally suppose one with such

gruesome ideas would still walk the earth for the edification of the timid, but she doesn't.

The entrance to Richmond by the nearest way is very charming. You come suddenly upon the castle perched up over the river, and as you wind down the hill the grouping of its towers is thrown into perspective, forming a delightful picture with the river and the bridge for a foreground. Three kings have been prisoners within these formidable Norman walls: two kings of Scotland, William and David Bruce, and after the lapse of three centuries, Charles I., who passed here on his way to Holdenby. The stalls and misericordes in the fine old church came from Easby Abbey. They are boldly carved, and one of them represents a sow playing a fiddle for the edification of her little pigs. There is a curious coloured mural monument, on the east side of the chancel, of Sir Timothy Hutton and his wife and children—twelve of them, including four babes, beneath two of which are these verses:

"As carefull mothers do to sleeping say,
Their babes that would too long the wanton play;
So to prevent my youths approaching crimes,
Nature my nurse had me to bed betimes."

The next is less involved:

"Into this world as strangers to an inn
This infant came, guest wise;
Where when 't had been and found no entertainment
worth her stay,
She only broke her fast and went away."

Altogether it is a cheery tomb. Faith, Hope and Charity are there, one of whom acts as nurse to one of the babes. Her ladyship's expression is somewhat of the Aunt Sally type, but that was the sculptor's fault. The ancient church plate includes a chalice dated 1640. The registers are beautifully neat and clean, and full of curious matter, such as the banns being read by the market-cross.

Apropos of Yorkshire marriages, the odd custom prevails in some parts of emptying a kettle of boiling water, down—not the backs of the happy pair, but down the steps of the front door as they drive away, that the threshold may be "kept warm for another bride," we presume for *another* swain. The way also of ascertaining whether the future career of those united will be attended with happiness is simple and effective. All you have to do is, as the bride steps out of the carriage, to fling a plate containing small pieces of the wedding-cake out of a window upon the heads of the on-lookers. If the crowd is a small one, and the plate arrives on the pavement and is smashed to pieces, all will go well; but if somebody's head intervenes, the augury is ominous; which, after all, is only natural, for is it not likely that one thus greeted would call at the house to bestow his blessing upon somebody? What a pity this pretty custom is not introduced into the fashionable

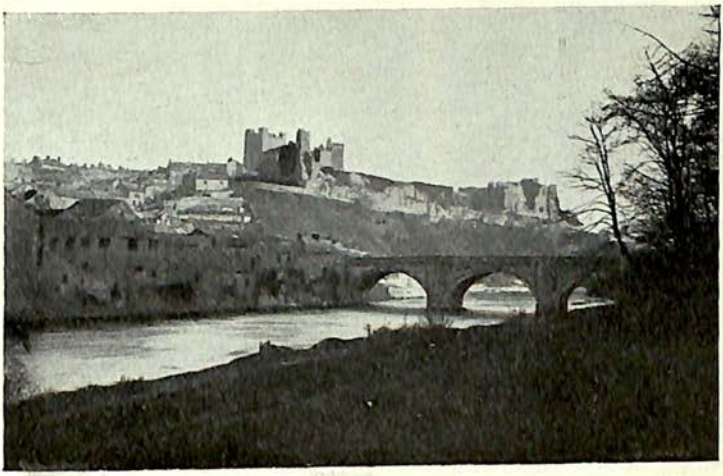
marriages of St. George's, Hanover Square. It would at least create a sensation.

For the rest of Richmond church, well—it was restored by Sir Gilbert Scott. It is regrettable to find the piscina on a level with the floor, beneath a pew seat!

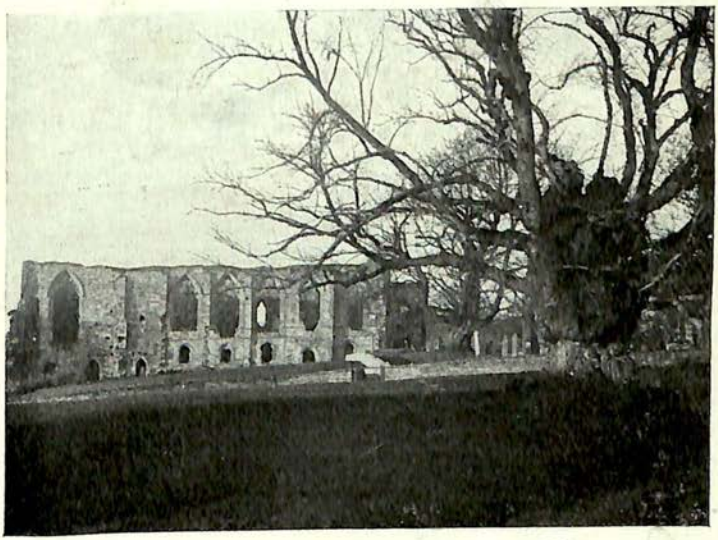
The curfew still rings at Richmond, telling the good people when to go to bed; but whether they go or not is another matter. We are told it is, or was, also rung for them to get up again at six o'clock; and the aged official whose duty it was to ring the morning bell, like a wise man, did so at his leisure, lying in bed with the rope hanging from the ceiling.[1]

From the churchyard, Easby Abbey is seen in the distance in a romantic spot by the river: and the walk there is delightful, along the terrace above the Swale. Like the rest of these fine structures, it was destroyed by the vindictive Henry in 1535. The water close at hand, the old abbot's elm, and the little church and gatehouse beyond, altogether make this a spot in which to linger and ruminate. The church walls are covered with curious and very well preserved paintings of the twelfth century, giving a good idea of the costume of the period. The tempting serpent, too, is shown twisted in artistic coils around a very

[1] This and other information we have derived from Mr. Harry Speight's interesting work, *Romantic Richmond.*



RICHMOND.



EASBY ABBEY.

pre-Raphael looking tree; and in another scene the partakers of the fruit are doubled up with remorse, or dyspepsia.

So close at hand as is Bolton on Swale, to the east, it would be a pity not to mention Henry Jenkins, who died there in 1670, aged one hundred and sixty-nine!—a man in Charles II.'s reign who remembered the dissolution of the monasteries, and who recollected as a boy assisting in carrying arrows in a cart to the battle of Flodden field (where veteran soldiers remembered the accession of King Edward IV.), was a wonder compared with the feeble memory of our present-day centenarians, who rarely recollect anything worth recording. When we think how nearly we are linked with 1670 by the life of Mrs. William Stuart, who died in the late queen's reign, and who heard from the lips of her grandmother how she had been taken to Court in a black-draped Sedan when Whitehall was in mourning for the death of the king's sister, Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans,—it would have been possible for the little girl to have spoken with old Jenkins, and thus with only three lives to have linked the early part of the reign of Henry VIII. with that of Victoria.

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